

# THE HARE



ERNEST  
OLDMEADOW













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BY

ERNEST OLDMEADOW

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*To E. F. G.*

*Not with a pen of gold,  
In blood of roses dipt;  
Not on fair vellum scroll'd,  
I wrought you this my script.*

*Here are no colors gay,  
Here are plain black and white;  
The white for eager Day,  
The black for kindly Night.*





**BOOK I**  
**THE DELIVERER**

*In ipsa nocte erat Petrus dormiens inter duos milites, vinctus catenis duabus: et custodes ante ostium custodiebant carcerem. Et ecce Angelus Domini adstitit: et lumen refulsit in habitaculo: percussoque Petri, excitavit eum dicens: Surge velociter. Et ceciderunt catenae de manibus ejus. Dixit autem Angelus ad eum: Praecingere, et calcea te caligas tuas. Et fecit sic. Et dixit illi: Circumda tibi vestimentum tuum, et sequere me. Et exiens sequebatur eum, et nesciebat quia verum est quod fiebat per Angelum: existimabat autem se visum videre. Transeuntes autem primam et secundam custodiam, venerunt ad portam ferream quae ducit ad civitatem: quae ultro aperta est eis. Et exeuntes processerunt vicum unum: et continuo discessit Angelus ab eo.—ACTUS APOSTOLORUM, xii, 6-10.*

# THE HARE

## CHAPTER I

“I T ’S Batwood—Puffer Batwood!”

“By Jove, it ’s Redding! Hanged if it is n’t good old Teddie Redding! I thought you were in Spain.”

“No. I ’m in Bulford.”

“It ’s ages since I last saw you, Teddie.”

“Ages. Let me see. How many years? What ’s to-day?”

“It ’s Tuesday, the seventeenth of May, eighteen-sixty-four.”

“Thanks. I knew it was Tuesday, and I even had some faint suspicion of the May and the ’sixty-four. But thanks for the seventeen. I always forget the day of the month, May the seventeenth, ’sixty-four. Puffer, it ’s twelve years, almost to the day, since my father left Bulford; and it ’s nearly thirteen years since you and I last met.”

“I remember, Ted. You all went away to Italy for the winter, did n’t you? Now, tell me something about yourself.”

“Look here, Puffer, I ’ve just had a happy thought. I ’m at ‘The Bulcaster Arms.’ If you ’ve nothing better to do, come and dine with me. It would be a great charity. I ’m all alone.”

“It ’s tempting. But I don’t live in Bulford now. I live at Sharley, and the last train goes just before eight.”

“We can get over that,” answered Edward Redding, after glancing at his watch. “Instead of waiting for dinner, we

could have a bit of cold salmon straight away, and a dish of cutlets to follow. And a bottle of hock. My father has often told me how good the Rhine wines are at 'The Bulcaster Arms.' To speak the simple truth, you 'll be doing me a service. I 've eaten nothing to speak of since breakfast, and I shall jump at any excuse for wolfing some food this very minute."

The old inn stood barely a hundred paces away; so the walk thither allowed time for nothing more than an interchange of chaff on the corpulence of Batwood and the scragginess of Redding. As they entered the hall of "The Bulcaster Arms," Oakes, the new landlord hurried forward. When, an hour before, young Mr. Redding had booked a room, the name of Redding meant nothing to Oakes, who was not a Bulford man; but he greeted Mr. Redding's guest obsequiously, saying:

"Good evening, Sir George. It is a long time since you did us the honor."

When they were seated at the table, Redding asked:

"What did the landlord mean by calling you 'Sir George'?"

"It wasn't my doing," his friend replied. "Probably you never knew that my uncle was Sir Rigby Batwood, the impecunious squire of Sharley. I didn't use to talk about it. Why should I? It was no good to me. Besides, there were three lives between me and the baronetcy. Blame the Sharley doctor, not me. He killed off three baronets in eleven years."

"Instead of a bottle of hock, I must make it a bottle of champagne, Sir George."

"Don't 'Sir George' me, Mr. Redding, or I'm off."

"I 'll call you Sir Puffer, and we will stick to hock; but it shall be the best bottle in the house. Now, tell me. How have you been puffing these long years and years? And, first of all, is there a Lady Batwood?"

"There is a Lady Batwood. We were married only last month. You know her. Four weeks ago she was Sylvia Witherington."

"Miss Sylvia Witherington? You luckiest of lucky dogs. I remember her as if we 'd met yesterday. Miss Sylvia was the youngest of the delicious maidens we called the Nine Muses. Eh?"

"Quite so. The youngest. Strangely enough, Sylvia and I were both born on the same day—the tenth of June, eighteen thirty-seven."

"How extraordinary."

"Stranger still, we were married on the same day too—the thirtieth of April, eighteen sixty-four."

"How remarka—" Redding began. But he saw the booby-trap in time, and made up for the unuttered syllable by lunging playfully at the baronet's head.

Charles, the waiter, approached. Teddie Redding recognized this veteran, who had survived two changes of proprietorship at the old hostelry, and no time was lost in agreeing on the Rhenish. A bottle of Johannisberger soon came up from the famous cellars cut deep in the living sandstone. It was delectably cold on so warm an evening. When the glasses were filled, the host said heartily:

"Here 's to Lady Batwood."

They drank. Then Sir George demanded:

"Can we drink to Mrs. Edward Redding?"

"We cannot," was the answer, spoken in tones of mock despair. "There will never be a Mrs. Redding. At the early age of ten, I saw and adored the lovely and only Sylvia. Since then I have thought of no other woman. And to-day I revisit the scenes of my youth, only to find that I am too late."

"Then the only thing for it is to drink to Sylvia again."

"Let us drink," assented Teddie in a still more doleful



voice. "By the way, this wine is capital. For one reckless moment it almost reconciles me to my blank and hopeless existence."

The fish, a generous shoulder-cut of true Deme salmon, appeared on the table, and the hungry young men quickly removed it from sight. While the cutlets were grilling, Sir George enquired about his friend's parents. Having expressed unaffected regret at learning that Edward's mother had been irrevocably sentenced to life-long exile from the English climate, and that her husband's health left almost as much to be desired, he asked, a little awkwardly:

"Is your father still a Roman Catholic?"

"Most decidedly."

"And—and yourself?"

"No, still Church of England. Not one of the Church's brightest ornaments and trustiest pillars, I'm afraid, but not a Papist. You see, the venerable parent has never put the slightest pressure on my mother and me, nor tried to influence us in any way. He keeps a good deal to himself. When we get tired of one mild spot, we fold our tents and look for another mild spot; but he always chooses a town where my mother can attend an English church service. Yet he invariably hits on a place within easy reach of some big monastery with a library, and then he causes no more anxiety to us. You know, his hobby is liturgiology."

"Heavens! What the deuce is that?"

"I suppose it's got to do with church music and services and all that sort of thing. The pater grubbs away at old books and manuscripts, and makes notes by the rod, pole, or perch."

"Hasn't it put him off a bit, seeing the Roman Catholic religion at home, on its native heath?"

"Bless you, no. What you hear and read in that strain is exaggerated. I grant there is dirt and superstition in some places, and that you often meet a slovenly, coarse-grained

priest. But aren't there heaps of things to put pious people off in the Church of England? Our clergy are better bred, better off, better behaved; but, as my father often used to say, thousands of them regard the cure of souls first and foremost as 'a living.' In Romish countries the priests are often social outsiders. In Portugal, for instance, I wish they shaved as often as they spat. Yet I can't help noticing how they stick to their job, getting up in winter before daybreak for their services, saying Mass on empty stomachs, turning out in the middle of the night to visit the dying, and so on. I expect to die a Protestant. Yet it sometimes comes over me that the Church of England is mainly successful as a social institution, and that the Church of Rome, from the standpoint of poor devils who want guidance and comfort and help, is unquestionably a religion. But don't let's talk theology. You started it, Puffer. Hooray, here are the cutlets."

There were four cutlets; and these, together with a small head of cauliflower, went the way of the salmon. A wedge of ripe Skilbury cheese concluded the meal, and before the knives ceased clinking it had been minished and brought low.

"Pardon my asking," said Sir George. "It is not idle curiosity. Are you and your parents free from anxiety? I had heard that your father gave away all his savings before he left Bulford. I'm a poor man myself, and I know what money worries are; but I have a good deal of influence, and I do beg you to let me use it if I can be of any service."

"You were always a brick, Puffer," Redding answered warmly. "Thank heaven, we are all right. Twelve years ago things looked black. My mother's fortune was lost—I ought to say stolen. But soon afterwards my father came unexpectedly into a very useful sum; more than what my mother lost. Besides, I have a sort of profession. I am called an artist. Don't laugh. I do illustrations for novels—for the monthly magazines, you know. They send me the

printer's proofs, and I draw Lucy standing beside the old mill-stream, hallowed by a hundred dear memories, with Edgar's letter in her little hand."

"The devil you do," snorted Sir George. "Now I understand where you learned that high-flown language about my poor Sylvia just now. I hope they pay you properly."

"Improperly. That is to say, they pay me more than I deserve, and more than I spend. This evening I'm determined to get rid of some of my hoard. We'll have a bottle of port, Puffer. My father, when he heard I was coming here, told me to look out for the '47. They had a big bin of it—twelve pipes, I think. Charles! Here, Charles, what about your '47 port? It ought to be drinkable by now."

"It's beautiful, sir," replied Charles, with conviction. "We've been drinking it these five years. For that matter, there was gents as thought it beautiful more 'n twelve years ago, when it was n't hardly used to the bottles. No offense, sir, but you've heard tell of the torchlight procession in Bulford, same year as the Great Exhibition, the night young Coggin was chaired round the town? Well, there was gents as drank our '47 that same night. A sin I called it: begging pardon."

Edward Redding's heart leapt. The conversation had suddenly moved within an inch of the very business which had drawn him to Bulford. He dissembled his relief, and waited patiently until the wine had been decanted and served. When Charles had left the room, Redding remarked, in an off-hand way:

"People were always talking about that precious torchlight procession. I was away from Bulford, and I did n't see it."

"Did n't see it? By Jove, I'm glad I saw it. It was something to see. Wait a bit, though. Surely you were n't clean out of that Coggin affair, Teddie. Don't I remember you being in Coggin's rag-and-bone yard the afternoon when

we played Red Indians? You were at the school that year?"

"Of course I remember the Red Indians. As if I could ever forget it! But I didn't see the end. What happened after the mammas arrived? Did you all trot home like good little boys?"

Sir George tossed off his port. If it had been raw stuff costing two shillings the bottle he could not have gulped it down more inattentively. Warming up, he bubbled over with reminiscences. As the moving spirit of the Red Indian revels, he had often been asked to tell the story of that riotous afternoon, and without conscious untruthfulness, he had gradually intensified and adorned the narrative until it attained to epic largeness. Edward Redding heard, for the first time, that two horses had been pressed into service; that "High" Hall and Chibual Primus, after arming themselves *cap-à-pie*, had tilted at each other on horseback, with lances made of withered laths, which snapped and splintered gloriously against the oilcloth breastplates; that Chalky Parkyns and Duck Lorimer had fought a gladiatorial combat on foot, Chalky playing the part of retiarius with a toasting fork and a remnant of tarred netting, while Duck stood up to him as mirmillo with a blunt old carving knife; and that Jawbones Feber, the ugliest boy in Bulford School, had beamed down on the rivals from a rocking throne of packing-cases, where he sat crowned with a soiled wreath of cotton roses as Queen of Beauty. It transpired further that, growing tired of the marine-store yard, the boys finally poured out along the canal bank; that they had swarmed into some empty barges; and that they had fought a small Battle of Actium, which did not end before three or four heroes had tumbled into the dirty water.

When this lively recitation had been delivered, Redding sought news of several old school-fellows. He learned that



Charlie Dolling had been drowned, as a midshipman, off the coast of Japan; that Fred Venn-Venning had run through two fortunes, and was already a bankrupt at the early age of twenty-five; that Lippy Vaughan was about to be thrown out of his curacy at Napperton for ritualistic excesses; that Bully Tranter was growing a long beard, and doing nothing else; that the Honorable Ralph Cotterton had married a tallow-chandler's daughter with pots of money; and that Walter Garnett was standing for Parliament. Mentioning other names, Edward Redding found that most of the old boys had settled down quietly in Bulford, as might have been expected. At last he decided that the right moment had come, and he asked:

"What about Slogger Coggin?"

"Coggin? Oh, he's still in town," answered Sir George. "He gave up the rags and bones when his father and mother died. Deals in old furniture now."

"Is he doing well?"

"I'm afraid not. They say his heart is n't in his business. He is a victim of music-mania. You will laugh when I tell you about him. Some years ago the Methodists began to get above themselves. Some of their members had made money. So they decided to build a new chapel, almost like a church, near to Victoria Park. They put the old chapel up to auction. There was n't one single bid. Next day Slogger Coggin went round and got it on a seven years' lease. What attracted him was the organ—not a bad little organ—in a gallery behind the pulpit, over the preacher's head. Funny arrangement. He uses the body of the chapel as a store-room, show-room, sales-room for old furniture. I saw it once, and, 'pon my word, it does n't look bad. There are grandfather's clocks between the windows, and pictures covering every inch of the walls—some of 'em skied higher than at the Royal Academy. The floor is covered with decent carpets and thick



rugs, and there are so many settees and easy chairs, and sofas and ottomans, that you feel as if you 're in a drawing-room. Coggin only shews clean, sound stuff, and his windows are always open. I suppose he has to buy frowsy things as well, but I did n't see 'em in the chapel."

"You said the organ attracted him?"

"Yes. That 's where the fun comes in. He 's gradually made the organ four times bigger than it was to start with, and he spends half his time playing it. There are big mirrors fastened in front of the gilt pipes. When a customer walks into the chapel, Coggin sees him at once. They say he always plays a few more notes, because he can't bear to break off anyhow. Then you lose sight of him for two or three seconds. He 's rigged up a comical arrangement like a cylinder, where the pulpit used to be. It 's covered with old crimson cloth and edged with gold braid, and looks quite solid. But there 's a rope-ladder hanging down the middle of it. Coggin slips down the rungs—he 's as thin as ever—just like a monkey, and he steps out to meet the customer as if there 's no such thing as an organ in the world."

"That does n't look like neglecting business."

"Yes, it does. *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*. Only bit of Latin I remember. People don't like it. How would you relish it yourself if you had a Bach's fugue banging at you every time you went to buy a kitchen fender?"

"I don't agree with you, Puffer. If this has been going on a long time I should have thought it ought to be doing Coggin a power of good, and that collectors of antiques must be coming from far and near to buy from such a unique shop-keeper."

"They did, until lately. But, you see, Coggin 's got rather a bad name. Strangers hear nothing very good about him when they enquire the way to his chapel now-a-days. They either give him a wide berth, or just drift in and hear him

play and waste his time, and sail out without buying a shilling's-worth."

Edward Redding flushed angrily. "What do you mean by saying Coggin's got a bad name?" he demanded.

"I think it was something about some pictures. He sold some oil paintings as originals, and they turned out to be copies. There was going to be a law suit; but he paid and hushed it up."

"Who told you this?"

"'Pon my word, I forget. Two or three fellows. Let me see, Rambury told me—and Tranter—and—I forget exactly, but others told me as well."

"Good heavens, Puffer, I'm astounded at you. Were you on the tow-path that afternoon when Coggin chucked Sniveller Currington into the canal?"

"Rather."

"That was the first time we called Harry Coggin 'Slogger' Coggin. And why? Because he began by knocking down Rambury and Bully Tranter like nine-pins, though they were nearly twice his size. Are you believing evil of Coggin on such testimony as theirs?"

"I don't see why not. They are glad to see him in disgrace, no doubt, but that's only natural. And I'm sure they're not the sort to dare to slander anybody unless there's something in it. They'd be afraid of having to pay damages, or of getting a damned good thrashing. Hang it all, Teddie. Excuse my bluntness, but both you and your father went a bit silly over that boy Coggin. You can't deny it. Indeed, we all lost our heads a little when he stood up to Bully Tranter, and when he pitched that dirty little worm Currington into six feet of water. But you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. Slogger was the son of a canting old-clo' man, and I'm afraid it's in his blood to cheat. Leaving Rambury and Tranter out of it, I know for a fact that Coggin

put down hard cash to hush up the affair. His own solicitor told me so."

"His own solicitor—told you so?"

"Yes. Woodley, of Woodley, Baker & Woodley."

"Hold on, Puffer. Think. How does it strike you on second thoughts?"

"Strike me? Oh! I see what you mean. But come, Ted. After all, this fellow Coggin—"

As he did not finish the sentence, Edward Redding took it over and said, in low tones:

"If I make a wrong guess at your meaning you will put me right. I think you were going to say this fellow Coggin, after all, is only Coggin. If Woodley had been acting for you or me he would have felt bound either to hold his tongue about our affairs, or to put them in the best light. But Coggin is only Coggin—a joke, a butt, an outcast. I don't doubt that Woodley welcomed him as a client, and charged the full ordinary fees or more."

"Go it, Teddie. In future, I shall always call Slogger's old chapel 'St. Coggin's.' According to you, he's both saint and martyr. Canonize him, if you must, in your own mind, but I can be the devil's advocate, if I want to."

Redding laid his hand on the baronet's arm and said, sadly and earnestly: "No. You can't. There are enough mean curs in Bulford to take the devil's part against Coggin, without you joining in. Look here, Puffer, I'll confess. When I asked, a few minutes ago, in such a casual way, about Slogger Coggin, perhaps I wasn't quite candid. But now I'm going to put all my cards on the table. The truth is that I've come to Bulford to-day expressly on account of Coggin. My father hears from him every three months, as regular as clockwork, but we're not satisfied. The poor devil always writes cheerfully; yet we sniff something between the lines. He's wretched in Bulford, and he's missing his

destiny. My plan was to make him sell up and clear out. I've brought some tin with me in case his liabilities exceed his assets. My father has just had this extra bit of money left him, and he wants Coggin to borrow it and to start fresh in another town, where he can make music his sole profession."

"He'll jump at an offer like that."

"We shall see. But surely you understand. I can't make the offer till we've settled this affair you have mentioned—this allegation of fraud."

"I tell you it's settled already. Dead and done with."

Redding drew his hand away. "Pardon me," he asked coldly. "Is Sir George Batwood the individual I went to school with, or is he somebody else?"

"I'm not here to be preached at," growled Sir George, reddening. "If you want me to stay, kindly come down from your high horse."

"No. I sha'n't come down. You must come up. You want me to believe you sordid, and I won't. If you had been accused of dishonor, and if you had been cheated into what looks like a confession, would you let the matter rest there? Coggin cannot leave Bulford till his detractors have eaten their words."

"Confound it, Redding, how do you know that Coggin did n't try to swindle somebody with those pictures? You're not a judge and jury."

"I'll tell you how I know. If somebody met me and said that Puffer Batwood had turned out a sneak and a coward, I should tell him straight that he was a liar; because I know you could never be either. It's the same with Coggin. You are a baronet, and he is an old-clo' man's boy; but it makes no difference. Let me tell you just a single fact. Before my father left Bulford, he raised a sum of money for Coggin's education. The cash came from Lord Bulcaster and others, and it was paid quarterly through solicitors, not as a loan, but



as an out-and-out gift. Listen. Harry Coggin has repaid every penny of that money, with compound interest, and it is being used to educate other poor boys. Is that the act of a man of honor, or is it the act of a cheat?"

"By George!"

"Puffer, I swear not to leave Bulford until justice has been done. I have the funds and the leisure. Whether I have the ability, events will shew. Now, I 'm going to ask you one thing. If it is proved to your satisfaction that Coggin has been falsely accused, will you stand by him and by me?"

Sir George whistled uneasily. He poured out another glass of wine and drank it. At last he replied: "Ted, I 'm not a hero. I tell you candidly that I wish you had run against somebody else this evening, instead of me. Now, why did you think Sylvia remained unmarried till she was twenty-six? Her age is no secret."

"I don't doubt Miss Sylvia was waiting for you."

"Thank you. But let us be serious. Sylvia had many offers, but her mother's ideas were high. Two suitors were cold-shouldered because their families were connected with trade. Sylvia's mama declares that she has simply thrown herself away on me, a poor baronet. And here 's Teddie Redding, like a bolt from the blue, suddenly demanding that I shall associate myself with a marine-store dealer's son, in a public row."

"You sha'n't be dragged into anything public. Promise me, Puffer, old fellow."

After swallowing more wine, Sir George said gloomily: "I promise you my help, behind the scenes. But if you can find some other Don Quixote instead of me, for heaven's sake let me off. Great Jupiter, a quarter to eight! Twelve minutes to catch my train."

## CHAPTER II

EDWARD REDDING rose so early on his first morning at Bulford that he found the entrance-hall of "The Bulcaster Arms" empty, and the big front door still shut. Having drawn the bolts and turned the great key very gently, he stepped out into bright sunshine. Not even a milkman was in sight.

His walk through one deserted street after another saddened the young man. Many fine old gabled houses had been pulled down to make room for emporia, establishments, and commodious premises, with large sheets of plate glass below, and silly gothic or feeble renaissance façades above. Most of the delightful little tuck-shops and book-shops had changed hands, and their windows were filled with up-to-date stocks, conventionally displayed.

He remembered every alley, every turning; and therefore he found himself within ten minutes, standing under a gateway almost opposite the building he was seeking. The words "Wesleyan Chapel" could still be seen, incised in a stone tablet over the door. Below them had been fixed a neatly-framed and boldly-painted board, bearing the inscription:

HENRY COGGIN

DEALER IN FURNITURE

AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Redding shrank back into the shadow. On the further side of the hot belt of sunlight, a tall, thin young man in a coarse shirt, corduroy trousers, and hob-nailed boots was

crouching over a gay rug. He held one corner of the rug in his hand, and it soon became apparent that he was mending it with an upholsterer's needle. He must have been engaged on the job for some time, for within two or three minutes of Redding's arrival, he shook the rug with an air of satisfaction and carried it back into the chapel. A few minutes later he came out again, carrying an arm-chair, and began to repair one of the castors. Both the rug-darning and the chair-mending were accompanied by music. At first the young man whistled; then he sang a little; and finally he hummed. Whistling, singing, and humming were all so soft and reticent that Edward Redding, on the other side of the lane, would have failed to hear them if the morning had not been breathless and the neighboring streets clear of traffic. The fragments of the melody which reached him were unfamiliar, and he would not have called them tunes.

During his work with the needle, the tall, thin young man's back was turned towards Redding, and when he emerged from the chapel with the arm-chair, his face was hidden by the bulky load; but there could not be a moment's doubt that this was Harry Coggin. The coarse garments could not hide their wearer's litheness; and his every movement was full of the old quick, sure, attentive mastery which had been so remarkable in him as a lad. Yet there was some immense change. That Harry Coggin should have ceased to be a boy was only natural; but somehow he seemed to have outgrown his young manhood. Although the strong shoulders were unbent, Edward Redding felt that the strange and lonely soul was bowed down under an almost intolerable load of disappointment and humiliation. Those softly hummed and faintly sung melodies were not the blithe and bird-like outbursts of a workman happy in his work. They were like croonings over hopes long dead.

As Harry stepped briskly back into the chapel for some screw or tool, Edward Redding slipped out of his hiding-

place and took the first turning, so as to escape unobserved. He could not have controlled his feelings sufficiently to speak with Coggin at that moment. Besides, he knew that it would be more considerate to postpone the meeting until the corduroy trousers and the hob-nailed boots had given place to less rude attire.

The pavements began to echo under the noisy tread of journeymen going to their work. In the High Street, a cart laden with sacks of flour went grinding and creaking past. Redding did not wish to be recognized, so he chose a narrow street which led to the rectory and to St. Michael's Church. Round his old home the trees and shrubs had been encouraged to grow so thickly that nothing could be seen of the rectory, save the gable-end and a twisted chimney. He entered the church and saw, with deep pleasure, that his father's successor had been carrying on the work of restoration with zeal and with admirable discretion. A wooden singing-gallery no longer blocked up the glorious wheel-window in the north transept, and the cruciform ground-plan of the church was once more revealed. Redding made his way to the Denniker chantry. Time had mellowed the new stone and the heraldic colors; and there were his father's initials, still plain to see, on the tiny disc of brass.

At breakfast the young man felt ashamed of his appetite, until he remembered that twelve hours had passed since his meal with Sir George. Eased in conscience, he helped himself once more to the kidneys and bacon and mushrooms and poured out another cup of coffee, better than any he had drunk in Spain. Having consumed these good things, he drifted out into the courtyard, where there was a cheerful noise of splashing water, of stamping hoofs, of jingling harness, of ostler's chaff; and there he made and lit a cigarette, as he had learned to do in Spain. Cigarettes, however, were a novelty in Bulford, and a gathering crowd of gaping stable-



boys drove him away. He left the yard by the side entrance in Coldwell Lane. As the lower end of this narrow way had been in his boyhood one of the quietest parts of Bulford, he counted on smoking a couple of cigarettes in peace; but almost immediately he came face to face with Rambury Primus and Rambury Secundus.

These frost-bitten young gentlemen, like their bloodless father, knew how to maintain inscrutability of countenance. Not giving Redding time to notice the dull sparks of annoyance which kindled for half a twinkling in the depths of his fishy eyes, Rambury Secundus became fluent with cordial greetings.

"What brings you to Bulford, Mr. Redding?" asked Rambury Primus, after these friendly interchanges were finished.

"Important business," Redding answered, rather coldly.

"We won't keep you from it," retorted Primus, holding out a clammy hand.

"Especially as we are late for important business of our own," added Secundus.

When they were round the corner, Redding threw away his cigarette, and walked boldly towards the principal streets. Now that the Ramburys had seen him there was nothing to be gained by lying low. In Market Street he recognized two or three old friends. Others he might have passed by without knowing them; for many young men of Bulford favored mustaches, whiskers, and even long beards. Redding himself, however, was clean-shaven, and one bearded man after another pounced upon him, instantly remembering the frank and pleasant young face.

Gratefully declining half-a-dozen offers of brandy-and-soda and of sherry and biscuits, Edward managed to extricate himself from the bustle of the main streets, and to turn, all alone, into the crooked ways which ran down to Coggin's warehouse. The chapel doors stood wide open, and there was nobody with whom to parley.

As Redding entered the scanty vestibule a blare of fierce music burst full in his face. It was as if the great scorching tongue of a prairie fire had suddenly licked him from top to toe. For a moment he was stupefied. Then he remembered what Batwood had told him, and he strode forward into the chapel. The savage chords went bumping on, heedless of the little staccato sounds which pattered and rattled all over them, as sharp and stinging as hailstones. Suddenly the hulking towers of harmony sank down, like palaces built on sand, and a tender strain brought the extemporization to an almost inaudible close on the soft full chord of the key-note. Ten seconds later, Coggin came quietly along the floor of the chapel to meet his visitor.

"It 's Redding, Teddie Redding," said Edward in a loud whisper. "Be quick. If anybody has followed me, is there a window we could spy him from? Hurry up."

"The roof," said Coggin. Although he had turned pale at the sight of Redding, he recovered himself in a flash, and became his old, nimble, efficient self at the suggestion of danger.

They scrambled up a corner stairway. Progress was difficult because the stairs had been used for the storage of hundreds of odds and ends, and there was a clear space only a few inches wide in the middle.

"Keep your head down and look through the round hole in the gable," said Coggin. "If there 's nobody, dodge over the slates and look through the hole on the other side. You can see both Chapel Street and Weighbridge Lane."

As Redding squinted through the first hole he grinned jovially. Then he popped up his head, and shouted out at the top of his voice:

"H'llo, Mr. Rambury. What about your important business?"

Rambury Secundus came out from an archway with unabated dignity and unruffled composure. "My business has

been attended to," he said icily. "I never waste time. By the way, Mr. Redding, I hope your own important business progresses satisfactorily."

"Quite, thanks. I'm engaged upon it now. So good morning, Mr. Rambury."

Coggin led the way down. When they were once more on the floor of the chapel, Redding asked: "Are we alone here?"

"Yes," Coggin answered. "My assistant is out with the cart, and no customer will call so early."

"Not so fast. I'm a customer myself. I've come to buy your entire stock—your lease and the whole thing, lock, stock, and barrel. What is the price?"

The furniture dealer wheeled forward a vast arm-chair, luxuriously padded and covered with dark green leather. As his visitor settled himself comfortably in the soft depths, Harry Coggin knew that a crisis was at hand. He divined that Edward Redding's words were the first rumblings of an eruption which was about to overwhelm his old landmarks and to change the whole configuration of his life. His usually firm voice shook a little as he gripped the back of the chair and said:

"First of all, Mr. Edward, I ask leave to say how glad I am to see you, and to enquire about your parents."

"My parents are at Barcelona, and they are fairly well. I am at 'The Bulcaster Arms,' with time on my hands. That is all you need to know about me and mine. Now, about yourself. We won't beat about the bush. My father and I are n't satisfied with your letters, Harry Coggin. You dwell always on the bright side, but you don't deceive us. I've come to Bulford with a firm resolve to root you up and to transplant you. There is no success and no happiness for you here—that is, unless you have some affair of the heart."

"The heart?"

"Yes. Are you engaged, affianced, betrothed? Or hoping

to be? Are you wooing, courting, keeping company? Have you a sweetheart, an inamorata, a young lady? If so, it will make a difference."

"Oh, no, Mr. Edward."

"Don't say 'oh, no' like that, as if I've asked whether you've a glass eye. You're twenty-four. Still, I'm glad to hear you have no entanglement. Now, tell me. Just before I left Barcelona, we had a letter from you saying that Mr. Daplyn had retired from the St. Michael's organ, and he had recommended you as his successor. Have they given you the post?"

"No. Mr. Duck is appointed."

"Duck? Duck who used to play at St. Peter's? Why, he's no good at all."

"They have given him the appointment, Mr. Edward."

Redding paused to think. He was vexed by the reiterated "Mr. Edward," and by Coggin's precise and deferential phrases. Yet, on reflection, he felt that there was indeed an immense difference in their social status, and that they would understand each other best as "Mr. Edward" and "Coggin." Changing the subject abruptly, he enquired:

"When your father was killed in that frightful collision on the Demehaven line, why did you claim nothing from the railway?"

"I could n't have taken money to make up for my father."

"Railway companies keep a reserve for such claims. The reserve is replenished with part of the money we pay for fares. You were entitled to compensation."

"I was not a loser, Mr. Edward, in a pecuniary sense. When my father was gone, I sold the yard and the old business at a very fair price."

"In your letters you always say that business is good. Have you put money by? Of course, there's a lot of stock here. Do you owe money on it?"



"Not a penny. And I should have five hundred pounds in the bank if—"

He did not finish the sentence, so Redding asked:

"The business makes progress?"

Coggin loosened his hold on the chair-back and turned away. The inbred pride which underlay his habit of humility made him hate to confess failure; and he was still more upset at the thought that his answer must disappoint Edward Redding, and that offers of pecuniary aid were imminent. But he gave a truthful answer, saying quietly:

"It has gone down lately. All the same, I make a comfortable living."

To Coggin's great surprise his visitor jumped up and exclaimed warmly: "Forgive me, Slogger. I ought n't to have asked that question. It was not frank, because I learned last night that things were not well with you. Puffer Batwood—Sir George Batwood—told me. He did n't know the details. Tell me all about the trouble, and we'll get you out of it."

"You have heard?" Coggin asked in dismay. "Mr. Edward, I give you my solemn word that I have done nothing to be ashamed of; no, and nothing that you or Mr. Redding would blame me for. I swear it."

"Swear nothing," returned Redding, even more warmly than before. "And as for your solemn word, give it me when I ask for it. Slogger, I know you are as honest as the noon-day sun. If you seem to stand in a bad light, I am sure that some damnable scoundrels have pushed you into it. Such curs as the Ramburys, for instance. You heard what I said to Rambury just now? I caught him sneaking. I deliberately insulted him. In other words, I took your side, Slogger, before knowing the facts of the case. Could I give any stronger proof of loyalty and confidence than that? But come. Let's both sit down in a quiet corner and have it out."

He strode along the chapel until he found two heavy oak chairs and a Chippendale escrutoire, set out on a small Persian carpet, behind a five-fold Chinese screen. When they were seated, he said:

"I know nothing more than this, that you made a blunder in buying and selling some pictures. Go ahead."

Coggin replied: "I was successful and very happy until about two years ago. You know that your father gave up the living of Bulford in '52, when I was twelve years old. I stuck to my Latin, as I had promised, till I could read any Latin author at sight. Not that I neglected my parents' business. I worked at that nine hours every day; but somehow there was plenty of time for study, although I gave most of my leisure to music. It sounds conceited, Mr. Edward, but I want you to hear the exact truth. On my seventeenth birthday, Mr. Daplyn said I knew as much as he did himself about counterpoint and harmony and fugue. And although he used to pick holes in my compositions, he often played them in church."

"Did the congregation know they were yours?"

"No. He said it would n't do. And events have proved he was right. After my father was killed, we sold the marine-store, and we did well in business. My mother was very clever. Most of our profits we invested in good furniture and cut-glass and musical instruments, but even then we had more money than we wanted in the bank. That was why I felt justified in publishing some of my music."

"And you lost a hundred pounds. You told my father so in your letter. But let us skip that, for the moment. Later on you shall tell me about the music."

"I have mentioned the music, Mr. Edward, for a reason. You see, my mother and I had kept to ourselves till I was twenty-one. On fine Sundays we often drove out to Skilbury. Some of the farmers' wives, who would n't know

mother when she was a rag-and-bone dealer's wife, were quite anxious to prove that they were her distant relations as soon as we could show a horse-and-trap, and clothes as good as theirs. But we made no friends in Bulford.

"Mr. Edward, your father used to write to me telling me to cultivate more ambition, and not to hide myself. It is true that I was entirely without ambition at that time, because I was perfectly happy. Our little home was so snug. With business increasing every year, we did not stint ourselves of cheerful fires and good candles. At the workshop we were always accumulating odds and ends of old wood; and from October to May there was always a blazing hearth at supper-time. From eight till half-past nine I used to read aloud to my mother, or play the piano. Books often went dirt cheap at auctions, and we read one novel every month, except when we found some good biography or book of travels."

"I want you to come to the affair of the pictures," said Edward Redding, kindly.

"I am coming to it. We had no friend, except Mr. Daplyn who came in now and then for a chat and a glass of wine. But, after I took this chapel over, I began to have business acquaintances. I am a valuer. One day I was called to value a houseful of furniture in Victoria Park. There was a sheriff's officer in possession. Old Mr. Rambury met me in the hall; I never knew why. The things were worth less than four hundred pounds, but Mr. Rambury took me on one side and said I had made a slip, and that no doubt I meant seven hundred. I stuck to four hundred, and he was very angry. Next day a strange lawyer arrived in Bulford, with a valuer from London, and they valued the things at three hundred and fifty. The London valuer came to see me in the afternoon, and was very polite and pleasant; but old Mr. Rambury cut me dead in the street. A little while after that I was sent for again to another house. Mr. Rambury met me quite cor-

dially. You know he was always getting special jobs, such as liquidating bankrupts' affairs, or realizing estates under wills. This time he chaffed me, and said that, as I was so fond of cutting him in half, it might save my time if he told me that the furniture was worth twelve hundred pounds. 'So that will be six hundred, Mr. Coggin,' he said. He laughed, like geese cackling. The stuff was really worth over a thousand; in fact, the parties could n't agree, so there was an auction which brought in a thousand, clear of expenses."

"We are a long time coming to the pictures, Slogger," said Redding, somewhat impatiently. "You used to be a boy of few words."

"I am very sorry," Coggin replied, flushing a little. "But you must needs understand that these two clashes with old Mr. Rambury, and several similar affairs with other people in Bulford, seemed to revive all the animosity that burned so strongly against me thirteen years ago, when I won the Robson Scholarship."

"I understand," said Redding. "There has always been a little gang in Bulford intriguing together to get all the pickings. My father often calls old Rambury 'the Robber Chief.' You were the disobliging cat that would n't pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them; so they decided to tie a brick round your neck and drown you."

Coggin darted a grateful look at his friend. "You have summed it up exactly," he said. And, after a long pause, he burst out bitterly: "But no. They did n't try to drown me. They put poison in my food. That's what they did, through the pictures. They tried to poison me through my business, my living."

"What happened?"

"One day young Mr. Venn-Venning came here—"

"Freddie Venn-Venning? Let me see, what did I hear



about him last night? I remember. Bankrupt. Squandered two fortunes. Decamped to Boulogne."

"I know that now, Mr. Edward, but I did n't know it the day he came here. He was expensively dressed—"

"Bad sign."

"Very high in his manner."

"Worse still."

"He ordered me about at the top of his voice. He needed some ready cash. Would I buy two pictures, by Constable? They were studies, not finished paintings, so he did not like them. He could only endure properly finished works on his walls. The pictures had come to him through an uncle."

"You ought to have declined them with thanks, there and then. Confound it, Slogger, no man can know everything, not even you. Picture-dealing is a ticklish job. You're a Latin scholar and a musician. Isn't that enough?"

As Redding posed this question, a silvery little bell tinkled just over his head. This meant that a customer had entered the chapel, and had set in motion a hidden spring and a wire which rang the bell. Coggin went forward to meet the new-comer; but he returned a moment later and said quietly:

"You will excuse me for a few minutes. The pictures are on that wall over there, between those bookcases. To draw the curtains, pull the cord downwards."

Crossing the floor, Edward Redding found himself in a wide recess, which had been formed by setting two lofty and massive bookcases at right angles to the chapel wall. The shelves of these cases held statuettes, vases, ivories, and old china. A good light struck into the recess from an upper window on the north side of the chapel. He tugged a silken cord, and the curtains puckered away, revealing two paintings, in frames which were indisputably old. Redding could not repress a whistle of surprise. The larger canvas appeared to

be a bold and lively study for Constable's "Leaping Horse," while the other shewed a tree-girt harvest-field in bright morning light, after a shower of rain. If they were not Constable's own work, these pictures were forgeries of almost incredible cleverness.

Redding's first scrutiny was barely finished when the customer went away, and Coggin returned. "You are an artist yourself, Mr. Edward," he said anxiously, "I know that you have brought at least two forgotten masterpieces to light in out-of-the-way places in Spain and Hungary. And please remember that I believed Mr. Venn-Venning to be an honest gentleman. I had read in the newspapers that he had inherited a great deal of money, and a grand house full of works of art. Was I an utter simpleton?"

"I still think," said Redding slowly, as he moved back from the wall without taking his gaze off the canvases, "that you ought to have referred Mr. Venn-Venning to a picture dealer. But I will be candid. In the circumstances you describe, I should myself have been deceived by these paintings. Now finish the story."

"I did just what you say I ought to have done. I referred him to a London dealer, and said he would get a better price that way. He flared up and swore, and said the dealers were thieves. After trying to discourage him in every way from the sale, at last I gave in. The price he asked was a hundred guineas, and I only beat him down to a hundred pounds."

"Hard cash down?"

"Yes. It is usual in this kind of business, so I keep a reserve of money in a strong box. Our conversation took place at this very escritoire, where you and I are standing now. I still felt uneasy and out of my depth; so before handing him the gold, I was determined that his receipt should be explicit. I opened the lowest drawer in the escritoire—mark this, Mr. Edward, because it is important—and took out a sheet of

my best paper and an envelope. Here are the words I dictated to him."

Coggin picked up a piece of paper, and while Redding looked over his shoulder, he wrote quickly:

*Received of Henry Coggin one hundred pounds sterling in full payment for two oil-paintings (a canal-bank and a harvest-field) by John Constable, R.A., formerly the property of my uncle.*

"Excellent," exclaimed Redding. "And Venn-Venning signed?"

"Not on the instant. At first he said: 'After all, perhaps I ought not to sell 'em.' I was relieved at that, and I told him so. But, just then, the bell rang, and a customer came in. He made up his mind all of a sudden. 'I came to sell 'em, and they shall be sold,' he said. He signed the receipt, and took the money. I put the receipt in this top drawer and he followed me towards the lobby, laughing and talking. He had wished me good-day, and I was busy with my customer, when he ran back and said, 'My gloves.' He found his gloves on the escritoire, and went off. That 's the last I 've seen of him."

"Great—God," said Redding. "Freddie Venn-Venning not only a cheat, but a thief? I can hardly believe it. You mean, he stole the receipt? But tell the tale your own way."

"Half-an-hour afterwards, I opened the drawer. There was my envelope. I peeped inside and recognized my document, without having to unfold the whole sheet. It was transferred at once to the strong box. That evening, I began to feel much pleased with my bargain. It was more for my own pleasure than for selling them that I arranged the recess where they are hanging now. But, three days later, Mr. Tranter came here to buy some cut-glass decanters, and he saw the pictures. There was no curtain then."

"Which Mr. Tranter? Not Bully Tranter, as we used to

call him—the boy you knocked down along with Rambury Primus on the canal bank.”

“The same gentleman. I admit I was surprised to see him. But, after all, it’s thirteen years since I knocked him down, so he could forgive and forget. He bought two inexpensive decanters, and then he asked about the pictures. He said: ‘Mr. Albert Rambury ought to see these,’ and the next day he brought Mr. Albert here.”

“Albert is Rambury Secundus—the one I spoke to this morning from your roof?”

“Yes. I was not very glad to see him when he came with Mr. Tranter. You see, Mr. Albert had already been against me; partly because his father hates the sight of me; partly because he married a Miss Currington—”

“Pardon my reminding you of all your assaults and batteries; you mean a sister of Sniveller Currington, whom you pitched into the canal?”

“No. A cousin. But the main reason why Mr. Albert detests me is a curious jealousy. He sets up to be the young leader of Bulford’s music and art. He collects engravings. And he wants to succeed Mr. Daplyn as conductor to the Choral Society, although he could not read a full score to save his life. He paints a little, and plays the piano a little, and has a thin tenor voice. When I published my music, he was very angry, and he wrote the sneering paragraph in *The Bulford Courier*. And I believe it was Mr. Albert who wrecked my concerts.”

“Concerts? What concerts? No. We’ll have that another time. Hurry up with the story. I see a glimmer of light.”

“Mr. Albert looked at the pictures and asked how much I wanted for the larger of the two. As I did n’t wish to do business with him, I said a hundred guineas. It was the better picture as well as the larger, but I would have taken eighty



pounds in the ordinary course. Well, he did n't haggle at all. He paid me cash, and sent Mr. Tranter for a fly to carry the picture away. He asked me for an invoice; but all the Ramburys are methodical, so I was n't surprised at that. The invoice was for 'an oil-painting, Canal Scene, by J. Constable, R.A., in gold frame.' I receipted it, and he put it in his pocket-book."

"Go on, go on," said Redding eagerly.

"A few days later, two perfect strangers came to see the other picture. I wondered how they had heard it was here; but they were very stiff, so I could n't enquire. One of them bought the small painting for sixty guineas. I gave him a receipt, like Rambury's. Of course, I was much pleased. Never before had I made so much money on one transaction; yet the whole thing had hardly taken one hour of my time. But a fortnight afterwards the storm burst. The postman put a letter in my hand just as I was going to the station. I read it in the train, on my way to Demehaven. It was from Mawby & Mawby, the solicitors, who 're always working with the Ramburys. They wrote in legal language. Their client had consulted them in what appeared to be a grave matter; they had perused what purported to be my receipted invoice for an oil-painting by one John Constable, deceased, formerly a member of the Royal Academy of Arts; they were credibly informed that the work was an impudent forgery; their client, who had not examined it, but had bought the painting on my guarantee, had been seriously damaged in his reputation in a quarter where he had offered the picture for re-sale; and they were considering the proper course to take.

"I was upset, until I reminded myself that this was merely one more instance of Mr. Albert's antipathy to me. On the back of the envelope, as I sat in the train, I penciled the draft of a reply to the effect that I had bought the pictures from a gentleman of position, who had stated in writing that

they were Constables, but that Mr. Rambury could have his money back if he felt dissatisfied, provided he withdrew the insinuation that I had been dishonest."

"The proper reply."

"When I came back here in the evening, another letter, with the London postmark, was awaiting me. A firm of solicitors wrote me on behalf of a Mr. George Brassington. Their client, they said, bought pictures for a nobleman, and he had been gravely compromised on account of a forged painting, alleged to be a Constable, which I appeared to have guaranteed as genuine."

"What did they threaten to do?"

"Nothing. They wound up by saying that I would doubtless perceive the extreme seriousness of the affair. I tore up my penciled draft for Mawby, and sat down here to think it all over. Naturally, I soon went to the strong box for Mr. Venn-Venning's receipt. By the light of a candle I began reading it; and then I found that the original phrase 'by John Constable' had been altered to 'after John Constable.' Mr. Venning, when he slipped back for his gloves——"

"Of course. You don't need to tell me that. Go on."

"I locked up the chapel and went straight to a few tradesmen whom I had obliged in one way or another. Mr. Cottle, of Cottle & Evans, the tailors, told me at once that Mr. Venn-Venning had fled the country, and that his checks and bills were simply waste paper, and that he was a cheat.

"That night, Mr. Edward, I did n't go to bed. I played the organ until it would n't have been right to make a noise any longer. Then I paced up and down this chapel—miles and miles. You see, there was only my unsupported word that Mr. Venn-Venning had altered the receipt behind my back; and he had altered it in such a hurry that you could n't be sure which had been written first, the 'by' or the 'after.' I knew what people would say, that I was trading on Mr. Venn-

Venning's bad name, and taking advantage of his absence to concoct an excuse for my own fraud. I shall never forget that night. In the morning this little basket overflowed with torn-up drafts. Please tell me, Mr. Edward, what I ought to have done."

"You ought to have gone to the best solicitor in Bulford."

"That was what I wanted to do. But perhaps you do not quite realize that I am still regarded by most of the professional gentlemen in the town as a rag-and-bone man's son. They would n't let me open an account at the Bulford Old Bank, for instance. The only solicitors I knew were Woodley, Baker & Woodley, who had acted for me when I leased this chapel. They used to be a first-class firm, but they have gone down. Anyhow, I knew no other solicitor, so I went to them as soon as their office opened. Mr. Woodley took both the letters, as well as Mr. Venn-Venning's receipt."

"What instructions did you give him?"

"To furnish an exact account of the trick that had been played on me; to lay strong emphasis on the fact that I only discovered it after receiving the lawyers' letters; to offer to take back the pictures, returning the money in full; and to add that the assistance of all parties would be required in bringing the swindler to justice. Was that right, Mr. Edward?"

"You might have done much worse. Continue."

"Mr. Woodley warned me that my story was uncorroborated, and that Mr. Venn-Venning might ruin me by a slander action. He said: 'The less letter-writing the better. Let me see these solicitors in person.' I agreed."

"And you did right, Coggin. I hope Woodley did right, also."

"The affair dragged out for weeks. The London man, Mr. Brassington, said it was a cock-and-bull story, and that he was n't sure he would be acting in the public interest if he

merely accepted his money back. Mawby & Mawby took the same line, in different language. They dangled over my head vague hints of criminal prosecution. Of course, I told Mr. Woodley that there must be nothing that would look like buying them off or paying them hush-money. I would have gone to prison for five years rather than that. In the long run, Mr. Woodley sent for me, and announced that they would return the pictures in exchange for their money and their out-of-pocket expenses, and that the matter would then be at an end, as they declined to be drawn into my transactions with Mr. Venn-Venning, which were not their business. Mr. Woodley pointed out that it was simple justice to recoup their expenses, and that he did n't think they would be heavy. I consented, because the swindler was out of reach, and there seemed no other way. But when the bills came in, Mr. Ram-bury's was over sixty pounds, and Mr. Brassington's was eighty pounds, and Mr. Woodley's nearly a hundred. He had charged me the whole expense of several journeys to London, though I know he had to go there on other business. So those two pictures have cost me nearly three hundred and fifty pounds, which was more than my whole working capital."

"They've kept their bargain? They have dropped the suggestion of fraud absolutely?"

"I do not doubt they have. But somehow the matter leaked out. There have been paragraphs in the *Courier* about a local art-dealer who is buying experience rather dearly. Anonymous letters come to me. Sometimes I find insulting words chalked on the door. It even happens——"

Coggin's words were cut short by a ting of the bell. A rotund and rubicund gentleman waddled in. He wanted a pair of small bronze horses.

"I mean the pair you bought at Mrs. Garrowby's sale," he said. "If you haven't sold them in the meantime."



Coggin led him up to the horses. They were standing on a broad window-sill, just behind Edward Redding.

"These are what I bought at Mrs. Garrowby's," said Coggin.

"You are sure they are the same—perfectly sure?"

Edward Redding stepped forward and asked sharply: "What do you mean, sir? Your question has already been answered."

"Well—you see," the customer answered, with a nervous half-giggle, "one hears funny things. One hears about certain paintings by Constable——"

"And one is going to hear something else," thundered Redding, who had inherited his father's great voice. "One is going to hear the plain order, 'Get out.' If you think Coggin—Mr. Coggin—is a dishonest dealer, you ought to be ashamed of yourself for encouraging him. Right-about-face! Quick march, you simpering humbug!"

Redding led the way towards the door at such a speed that the astounded stranger could not keep pace, and had to change his waddle for a comical run. As Redding regained his old place near the bronze horses, he saw that Coggin was pale and trembling.

"Forgive me—Harry," Edward blurted out. He shared his mother's pride of birth, and it cost an effort to say "Harry"; but he got the word out clearly and warmly. "Forgive me for interfering. But if this is the life you are living among snobs and curs, my blood boils. Has it happened before?"

"It happens every day," Coggin answered in low tones. Then, losing all control, he suddenly blazed up and cried: "I thank God my mother is dead. She died in peace. This would have killed her. I can stand it no longer."

"You're not going to stand it any longer, Harry," said Edward Redding. "Within a month you shall be out of this accursed town, never to set foot in it again."

"No, Mr. Edward, no, no!" cried Coggin desperately. "If this had n't happened, I might have said Yes. But I can't go now. They've tried their hardest to drive me out and they've failed. Here I stay, till I've lived down the last breath of slander. Oh, Mr. Edward, surely you can see it. If I slip off like a thief in the night they'll say it's true. Your father fought for my mother and for me. It's a common saying that he would be in Bulford to-day but for 'Raggie Coggin,' 'Boney Coggin.' No. For his sake I will clear my name before them all."

Redding took a few strides down the chapel and up again, and then said:

"You are not going to slip out of Bulford like a thief in the night. You are going to leave in broad daylight, with all flags flying. I can promise you that. Now get on with your work and I will get on with mine. Can I see you to-night? To save time, perhaps you would provide a little bread and cheese and a jug of ale."

"We close the chapel at seven. I have a meal at half-past," Coggin replied. And he added, with a sudden return of his old humility: "If I am not taking too great a liberty, Mr. Edward, perhaps you would . . . perhaps I might ask you to do me the very great honor of . . . of dining with me."

At the word "dining," Edward Redding started. Bill Coggin's son dining late! He concluded, however, that the furniture-dealer had merely been fumbling for an acceptable word, and that the meal would be a substantial tea, which the Reddings had always detested. Still, he could not easily refuse; and it suited his rapidly-forming plans to be absent from "The Bulcaster Arms," where Rambury's emissaries would certainly try to keep him under observation. So he answered:

"With the greatest pleasure. Dinner, here, half-past seven."

### CHAPTER III

AS he stepped out of Coggin's cool chapel into the dusty street, Redding instantly took one small, preliminary decision. He must clear out of "The Bulcaster Arms" without a moment's delay, before anybody could embarrass him there by calls or messages. So he hurried back to the inn, paid his bill, packed his things and left word that he would send a messenger for the valises later on. If no better plan occurred to him, he could easily take the last train to Demehaven, where there was a modern hotel.

To evade acquaintances, the young man slipped down Ferry Lane to the landing-stages on the banks of the Deme. It was pleasant to see the broad clean stream once more; and when a boatman came forward with seductive praises of the lovely morning, Edward could not resist the temptation of a light skiff. Although a gentle current opposed him, he shot forward at a prodigious rate up the lonely reaches, never pausing until he could see the white gable of "The Anglers" at Minnowbridge reflected in the bronze-colored water. He had sculled nearly five miles, and it was one o'clock.

In an arbor built out over the running water, Redding sat for at least an hour after disposing of his cold mutton and bread and cheese and bitter ale. While he brooded, he saw the first streaks of daylight. It seemed prudent to hold his brains back from a theory and a plan until he had put certain questions to Coggin. But the sun was hot, and he knew he must wait a little before sculling home again; so he sharpened a pencil and began a letter to his father. After a paragraph about his journey, he wrote:

*Now for Coggin. You were right when you said something was wrong. He has told me part of the story, and there will be more to-night.*

*His health seems good. My first sight of him this morning—he did n't see me—was outside the old chapel, now his warehouse and shop. I saw him working like a nigger, in a flannel shirt and corduroys. When I met him later, he looked thoroughly presentable. Good navy-blue serge, dark blue cravat.*

*What strikes me most is his command of words. Now and then he relapses into that abominable old 'umble manner of his, and he still forms sentences too deliberately, but in the main he speaks like an educated man of the world, except that every Tom, Dick, and Harry is "Mister."*

*Honestly, his organ-playing is magnificent. We must get him out of this hole of a Bulford.*

After his mention of Coggin's deliverance from Bulford, Edward Redding ceased scribbling. How was the deliverance to be wrought? He felt it could be achieved: indeed he had promised Harry Coggin that he would achieve it. Yes. It should be done—done before Midsummer Day.

The drift homeward was not like the pull outward. At least twenty times the oarsman ceased rowing altogether, watching the drops as they fell from the idle blades or merely keeping the skiff in mid-stream by a light stroke now and again. Thrice he tied up under the willows and smoked the full-flavored cigarettes he had brought from Spain. Yes. It should be done. He saw a way.

The closer his feet drew to the chapel and the nearer the hands of his watch approached half-past seven, the more unsavory to Edward Redding became the thought of a dinner with Coggin. Although he held Liberal opinions in politics and was always ready to break a lance on behalf of the op-



pressed, he was so fastidious and aristocratic in his personal habits that he could not help holding off the oppressed at an arm's length. It was true that he had always found Coggin the pink of cleanliness and wholesomeness. But talking with a self-educated genius was one thing and eating with him was another. Although Redding did not dare to speculate on the menu, he felt horribly sure that he would eat strong and greasy dishes in a sealed-up kitchen, nauseous with odors of past fryings and onion-choppings innumerable. And after his long day in the living air on the clean river, amidst the sweet young leaves, such an experience would be doubly disgusting. The chapel door was closed; but all the windows were open, and through these windows came delicate music which seemed to climb and cling all over the gaunt building, beautifying it like bright and fragrant creepers on an old barn. Redding had hardly pulled the bell when a bolt was drawn, and Harry Coggin opened the ponderous door. The two young men entered the chapel. Redding had expected to find it stuffy; indeed he had been pitying himself as a much-suffering mortal for having to do errands of mercy in a second-hand furniture shop. But "St. Coggin's," as Sir George Batwood called it, smelt almost as cool and fresh as the open river. Redding could not help saying so.

"Yes," agreed Coggin, looking pleased, "everything here is sweet and clean. If you will pardon my saying so, it is cleaner than most houses. Look."

He thwacked in succession two or three padded arm-chairs and a luxurious divan. Hardly a speck of dust flew out. "In houses," he explained, "they beat carpets, scrub floors, paint doors, paper walls and ceilings; but furniture like this often goes a life-time with nothing more than dusting and brushing. Whatever comes in here is picked open and purified inside and out. Often we put in entirely new stuffing. You would be astounded at what we find, even in furniture

from first-class shops—rags and straw and dirty rubbish. I have a very clean upholsterer, and most of these things are better than new.”

The spacious and lofty chapel, softly carpeted and warmly lighted by the setting sun, was certainly attractive. Although it was a shop and warehouse, it seemed to be permanently furnished, like a grand hall, rather than stocked with priced and numbered bits of furniture for sale. As Edward glanced at the patches of noble bronze, of imperious brass, or lordly mahogany, of legendary oak, of antique marble, of intimate china, of seemly silver which caught the ruddy light here and there, he had an inspiration.

“Why not have our bits of bread and cheese and our tankard of beer here, where it’s so airy and comfortable?” he asked. “Truly, I don’t wish for anything better.”

“But I do, Mr. Edward,” retorted Coggin, with unusual gaiety. “The dining-room is quite as airy. Shall we go?”

He led the way into what had been, in the days of the Wesleyan services, the minister’s vestry. Redding cried out. He saw a well-proportioned room, oak-paneled half way up the walls. In an old-fashioned little grate a heap of fir-cones burned merrily. Two wax-candles, still unlit, had been set in heavy brass candlesticks on a massive oval table. The tablecloth was snowy-white, and the few pieces of silver and glass reflected the last slanting sunbeams. When his first surprise was over, Redding noticed four choice engravings, judiciously hung; a bowl of yellow roses, between the brass candlesticks; two high-backed chairs; a claret-jug, and a crystal decanter. The upper sash of the window had been pulled down as far as it would go, and a life giving breeze kept tossing into the room and dragging back again into the garden the light stems and crisp leaves of a Virginia creeper.

“You would wish to wash?” said Coggin.

"No. I was splashing only half-an-hour ago," Redding made haste to answer. It was true. On giving up the skiff he had attempted some awkward ablutions at the boatman's cottage. His fear and prejudices were dying hard. Even with the spotless table-cloth before his eyes, and with the delicious air in his nostrils, he shrank in dismay from Coggin's upper regions, where he felt sure there would be disorder and dirt and staleness. Edward had so often heard his father say that, although a clergyman had a pleasant life on the whole, nothing could quite set off the horror of sitting in the bedrooms of the poor.

Coggin seemed disappointed at the refusal. He asked to be excused for a few moments, and disappeared through a narrow doorway in the far corner of the room. Very soon he emerged, carrying a soup tureen and two deep plates on a small tray. Guest and host sat down to table. Alluring odors filled the room.

"Perhaps you will say grace, Mr. Edward," Coggin said.

"Confound it all," retorted Redding, "I'm a parson's son, not a parson, say grace yourself."

"*Benedictus benedicat*," Coggin said, rather shyly. Then he uncovered the tureen and served a kidney soup, hot and clean and fragrant, with sippets of still firm toast a-float in it. After a first hesitating spoonful, Redding fell to. Always a hungry young man, he felt ravenous after his day on the river. Meanwhile the host bent down and took from a pail of cold water under the table a small bottle of Moselle. Having wiped it carefully, he drew the cork and filled two thin green glasses. The guest opened his eyes wide. After such a soup, was it likely that there would be bad wine? He raised the glass to his lips. At first sip he quailed. After the heavy juices of Spain and the vinous hock of "The Bulcaster Arms" this wine cut his palate for a moment, like an exquisitely tem-



pered blade. Then the memory of summer days at Trier and in the Moselle valley rushed back upon him, and he knew how fine a bottle had been opened in his honor.

Coggin carried away the soup-plates and returned with a homely brown dish, of oblong shape, wherein lay two strange-looking packets. When the packets were opened, Redding saw and smelt two speckled trout which had been baked in buttered paper. With these toothsome little fishes the Moselle tasted better than ever.

“By Jove, Slogger,” exclaimed Redding heartily, when nothing but a skeleton remained on his plate. “I’ll try and say a grace now, if you like. What a soup! And what trout! And what wine! But really, it is too bad—going to all this trouble and expense. If there’s another dish to follow, for heaven’s sake don’t get up from the table. Let the cook bring it herself. Never mind if she’s a bit unpresentable. We’re not standing on ceremony. Besides, I’d like to see her. She’s a genius. Call her in.”

“This is my regular dinner, every night save Sunday,” exclaimed Coggin, in his most modest tones. “I’ll admit that to-night we have an extra dish and two kinds of wine instead of one. As for the cook . . . well, I’m cook myself. So please excuse me again.”

He retired with the fish-plates. Redding gazed after him in astonishment. Then he sprang up and followed. Pushing open the narrow door he found himself in a tiny kitchen, where every utensil shone and where there was not a dirty knife or a potato-paring or a ragged clout to be seen. Coggin was bending down and taking a shapely earthenware pot out of the oven. Redding, who could do nothing domestic himself, had always been a little frightened of people who could cut up animals and whet long knives and play with scorching fire: so he recoiled and sat down again at the table. The shapely pot was set down on a straw mat, and Coggin pro-

duced from its depths the legs of a plump chicken, together with many little dice of various colors cut from young carrots, young turnips, and young potatoes, and moistened with a wonderful sauce or gravy, the color of old mahogany. He transferred these good things to the piping-hot dinner-plates, and then poured out very carefully two glasses-full of claret.

"Please eat while it 's hot," he said.

Edward Redding obeyed. The delicate white meat came away from the bone at a touch; yet it had not been cooked to rags, and, thanks to the sauce, flavor had gone into the chicken instead of being stewed out of it. And when he tasted his Bordeaux he knew that the Queen in London was drinking no better.

"Slogger," he said at last, "you have deceived me. This morning I came here offering to lend you some money. How you must have smiled. You say you dine practically like this every night. So you are not only a genius but a Croesus."

"Not quite," retorted the other. "My breakfast is like a navy's. But I do think it is not a waste of time to spend an hour in cooking a proper evening meal and another hour in eating it. I do it on principle, Mr. Edward. Living by myself like this, there is a temptation to go on playing the organ, or to finish some interesting book, and to be untidy and careless about meals. I overdo it, perhaps; and if any of the Bulford people knew it they would call me a ridiculous upstart and snob. But if I did n't overdo it . . . well, I should underdo it. And as for expense, it is cheaper to dine well than to dine badly."

"But these wines?"

"Wine and music are my only luxuries; and they both earn me more than they cost. You see, Mr. Edward, I go to big sales now, at grand houses, and I buy all sorts of things. If I don't make so many mistakes as other dealers when I buy wine or a piano or a harp, and if I get better bargains, it is

because I study wine and play the piano. As a rule though, I drink only a little ordinary claret, bottled by myself, and it does n't cost sixpence a day."

The bare chicken-bones gave place in due time to the dessert—a glass bowl containing about a dozen large, handsome, ripe, dry strawberries, and some ratafia biscuits with a small wedge of Cheshire cheese. The rest of the '38 Château Pape Clement went down well with these good things. And as the wine dwindled in the decanter, the daylight outside weakened until the diners were glad of the cheerful flame in the hearth which Coggin had replenished with small pieces of fragrant old wood, saved from his workshop. They did not light the candles, as this would have meant shutting the window.

"And now," said Edward Redding, after he had praised his dinner for the tenth time, "let us have the story of your music. You mentioned concerts."

"My music," Harry Coggin answered directly, "was a complete failure. There were two selections: 'Ten Pieces for the Organ,' and 'Six Preludes and Fugues' for the pianoforte. They fell absolutely flat."

"You sent us them both. My mother plays well, but we were none of us musical enough to understand your compositions merely by reading them on paper, and there was no piano where we were staying. At Freiburg the organist of the cathedral played them over for us. We thought them fine. So did he. In fact he borrowed them, to copy them; and by the way, we never got them back. Surely some people praised them here."

"I never heard of one."

"Well, Coggin, we enquired about it; and months afterwards, when it was too late, we learned the truth. The people you went to are no good. They call themselves publishers, but they don't publish. They engrave music beautifully, on paper that will last a thousand years; and then they fold

their arms and wait for the public to find out that the composition exists and to buy it in reams. What did it cost you?"

"Over a hundred pounds. It can't be helped now, and it did me good to put music in print. Perhaps I should n't have had such a failure if it had n't been for the concerts. I know the *Bulford Mercury* meant to review the compositions favorably; but the concerts frightened them."

"I'm waiting for the concerts."

"My idea was to give two concerts, one in the afternoon, the other in the evening. You see, Mr. Edward, the music-shops here would not show my compositions in their windows: because I am now a dealer in musical instruments myself, and they resent the intrusion. So I decided to give two short chamber concerts, and to play two of my own things at each concert. The programs were really good—Handel and Bach on a real old harpsichord, and afterwards modern composers, especially Schumann, who's hardly known in Bulford. I engaged the Victoria Rooms. The booksellers were very kind. All of them, except Tucker and Slann, shewed the program and sold tickets.

"At first we were immensely encouraged, my mother and I; because Mr. Rixon sent round within a few hours for more tickets. I went to Prout and Hopkinson's, but they'd sold all their tickets too, and it was the same everywhere. And that was three weeks before the day.

"The afternoon came. My mother had a new black silk dress and bonnet, very plain but very good. She insisted on having a seat at the back, in a corner. We were a little surprised at being the first to arrive, until I remembered that, as the seats were all reserved and numbered, there was no need for anybody to come early. Three o'clock came. At five minutes past, one man came in. It was the reporter of the *Bulford Mercury*. He glanced round, and was just going to



beat a retreat when I ran after him to ask if my watch was wrong. He shewed me his own watch, and looked very much embarrassed and a bit upset. I drew him into the ante-room and begged him to speak. He would n't at first. Then he said: 'Mr. Coggin, I heard half a hint of this last night, and I hoped it was n't true. I say it 's a shame. If I were the Editor, instead of a poor devil of a reporter, the *Mercury* would speak out on this. Bulford is a damnable town.' He went away, and I guessed what had happened. The front seats were half-a-crown each and the others a shilling. Somebody had spent over fifteen pounds buying up all the tickets and not using one of them."

"You take my breath away," burst out Edward Redding. "What you tell me is vile beyond belief. Yet . . . are you sure? If anybody did this deliberately, he put fifteen pounds in your pocket."

"No, Mr. Edward. I had announced that the whole proceeds would go to the Infirmary."

"Some thoughtless people may have bought all the tickets for the sake of the Infirmary; not to spite you at all."

"When you have heard the rest, you won't say so. Well, I sat down and went right through the whole program. The windows were open; and the hall-keeper told me afterwards that while he was smoking in Dark Alley, the narrow little lane alongside the Victoria Rooms, young Mrs. Albert Rambury and another lady walked up and down and listened. My mother cried that night as I had never seen her cry before; and I made up my mind to come out victorious at the second concert, just for her sake.

"Mr. Rixon told me, first thing next morning, that while my first concert was going on, people he did not recognize had bought up all the tickets for the second. At the other book-sellers' it was the same. I seized the bull by the horns and engaged the Assembly Rooms that very morning. I advertised



that, owing to the tickets being all sold a week ahead I had taken a larger concert-room, and that the Victoria Rooms tickets would be available there. The news of what was going on flashed round the town, and there was a big demand for tickets. We sold at least two hundred, mostly shilling ones, to genuine applicants.

“On the night, the shilling people came early; but right up to eight o’clock the front seats were nearly all empty. Of course those were chiefly the seats I had had to keep for the mysterious people who ’d bought the Victoria Rooms tickets, and I felt glad they were staying away. The recital began with the first of Schumann’s *Noveletten*. Perhaps you know it.”

“No.”

“The beginning is massive and loud. But a tender passage follows, and just as this had begun I heard stamping and jostling and loud talking. The front seats were filling up. Still, I did n’t take my eyes off the music. When the piece was finished, the back seats began to applaud. Instantly the front seats sent up cat-yells and yelled ‘Rags- and-bones,’ over and over again. I looked; and instead of seeing, as I ’d expected, the fast young men of Bulford, I saw what looked like the whole population of Pig Lane. I found out afterwards that somebody had put all the Victoria Rooms tickets into envelopes and had caused them to be thrown into the Pig Lane houses, about half-past seven on the very evening of the concert.”

“All this is astounding,” said Edward Redding. “But I ’m puzzled. Why did Pig Lane yell ‘Rags- and-bones’? Surely the Pig Lane people ought to have been your champions.”

“Not at all. You don’t understand, Mr. Edward. Even when we had the marine-store on the canal-bank, long before I won the Robson Scholarship, we had no friends in Pig Lane. You see, my mother married a good deal beneath her, as people

say. The Croxons, of Skilbury, her family, used to be well-to-do yeomen. My mother always considered herself above Pig Lane. And the Pig Lane people always considered themselves above the old-clo' man's family. When we closed the yard and got on, Pig Lane resented it. We had to drive that way whenever we went out to Skilbury; and although the horse and trap and harness and our own clothes were never showy, people often jeered at us."

"You did n't mind, Slogger?"

"A little. I wanted to be friendly with the young working-men; and they thought I was patronizing them. I wanted to work with the educated people, on the Choral Society and the Antiquarian Society, for instance; and they thought I was presumptuous."

"Finish telling me about the concert."

"Well, as soon as there was a lull, I began to play Mozart's Fantasia and Sonata. It was of no use. The uproar drowned the piano. Then a few gentlemen, who were ashamed of the mob, came down the gangway and began chucking out the noisiest lads. That led to a free fight. The worst of it was that a man named Ned Clegg, a bruiser—the Napperton Chicken they called him—wanted to take my side. I had helped him a bit when he was going to be sold up for the rent. This Ned Clegg hurt his hand at the beginning of the fight, so he unfastened his belt and laid about with it, right and left. It had a heavy brass buckle, and it made some ugly wounds. I was blamed for them all. They said I'd hired the Chicken in case of a row. At last the police poured in, and the manager of the Assembly Rooms rushed up to me and ordered me to stop playing as they must clear the hall before more damage was done. They turned everybody into the street and put out the gas; but the fighting went on in nooks and corners for nearly an hour. The worst thing was that somebody hustled my mother and asked what fine lady's

left-off silk gown she was wearing. My mother was never the same after that night."

Henry Coggin paused in his narration. The fire, which had been burning low, happened to flame up at that moment, and Edward Redding saw the narrator's pale face harden. Coggin's voice hardened too as he added slowly:

"If I could have found out who it was, I believe I should have killed him."

Dimness grew again, and there was a dead silence. At length Redding asked:

"You did not accept this damage and these insults without retaliation?"

"Immediately afterwards, my mother fell ill," Coggin answered. "They said there was no hope for her. She would n't leave Bulford; so when I heard that this chapel was to let, with the old Sunday School behind, I jumped at it. I cleaned and altered the old school into quite a cheerful little house. The view over the Deme from the back window is beautiful, and the position is high and healthy. It was living on the canal-bank all those years that broke her constitution. But she never set foot in this place. My plan was too late . . . And, after her death, when I was settling here, I had n't the heart to remember the concerts. Then came the affair of the forged pictures. No, Mr. Edward, I have not retaliated. But perhaps you will consent to our saying no more about it to-night. There is a special reason why I want you to drink a glass of really good wine—a very old Madeira. May I close the window and light the candles?"

## CHAPTER IV

**W**HEN the window was closed and the candles were lit, Henry Coggin poured out his ancient Madeira. Although it had been grown at the time of the French Revolution, the handsome-looking juice was still hale. The arrogance of its youth had given place to quiet strength. Differences of birth and station were forgotten for the moment as the two young men held their glasses up to the candle-light, inhaled the reticent fragrance, and finally received the honorable draught within their lips.

For a short time the conversation was about nothing save wine. Coggin declared that, at a sale of a man's possessions, you could generally guess whether the contents of the cellar would be good, bad, or indifferent, merely by casting your eye over the books, the pictures, the furniture, the plate, and especially the glass. He added some reminiscences, to prove his point.

"You told me there was a special reason for opening this magnificent, stunning, marvelous, insurpassable, never-to-be-forgotten bottle to-night," said Redding, at the second filling of his glass. "I'm waiting."

Several moments passed before Coggin replied:

"You will think me foolish and sentimental. The special reason is this. Every evening of my life, I sit here and drink one small glass of fine wine in memory of Mr. Redding, your father."

"Good Lord! But the guv'nor is n't dead."

"I ought to have said in his honor, not in memory of him," exclaimed Coggin. But he added hastily: "No. Memory



is the right word. I could write down every action I ever saw him perform, every syllable I ever heard him utter. And in this room, all by myself, I go over it all, again and again."

Edward was on the brink of a chaffing rejoinder. He would have let it slip out, if the almost religious exaltation of the other's looks had not compelled him to be silent. Coggin went on:

"I cannot bear that you should go away from Bulford thinking of me as a conceited upstart. That I should dine in state six nights a week, by the light of wax candles, and that I should drink fine wines out of old cut glass . . . this could be misunderstood. Perhaps even you, Mr. Edward, will not quite see my meaning.

"I hold your father, Mr. Edward, in such reverence that some people would call my feeling a sin. If it were not for the sacred memory of what he was, and of what he bade me be, I should have let everything go—Latin, French, English, philosophy, history, everything except music. None but myself can ever know what it has meant to study alone, to be high of purpose and conscientious in execution, grinding on alone, all alone, month after month, living a secret life to escape ridicule and persecution. The first time I ever tasted wine was one afternoon when your father drank a glass of '15 port at our cottage. He turned and made a jest to me, about having a cellar of my own some day. This nightly wine . . . I shall shock you, Mr. Edward, but there's no other way of explaining it . . . it is my cup of communion with him. When I play the organ, he does not come into my mind; but when I sip my few drops of old grand wine he seems to be in the room with me. I seem to see his hand spread out over the top of his glass to prevent my mother filling it again; a thin hand it was that day, after his long illness. Then I say to myself: 'At this moment, in France or Switzerland, or Italy or Spain, he is tasting his little glass of wine,' and I



raise my own glass to my lips. Mr. Edward, the empty glass you see at my elbow is the very glass he took from my mother's hand twelve years ago. Nobody else shall ever use it. Every night I put it away in a box lined with soft wool. Perhaps you don't understand; but I 'm sure you will drink his health with me."

He stood up shyly. Redding, deeply touched, rose also. Then Coggin said: "Here 's to the patron saint of this house. Wherever he goes, may God bless him in all he does and all he suffers."

They drank the toast and sat down again. The silence which followed was broken by Redding. "May I tell my father about this nightly toast?" he asked gently. "I invited myself to dine with you, and I feel I have perhaps intruded on your secrets."

After musing a little, Coggin answered: "I should like you to tell him. And, now that this is a secret no longer, I should like you to tell him a little more. Not only does his empty glass stand at my elbow already ready for him, but his room is ready too."

"His room?"

"Yes. Don't laugh at me. A few months ago he wrote that he was determined to come and see me, but that it would be a flying visit, and that nobody in Bulford was to know. The day I got that letter I began to prepare his room. I know it sounds like a great liberty, but . . . but perhaps you will look at the room, Mr. Edward, and tell him what it is like. I 'll go and light the candles in the room and on the stairs."

He went out through the door into the chapel, leaving it ajar. His footsteps soon died away along a corridor. But the weird stillness did not last long. From the chapel came a pleasant clangor. Edward jumped up and peeped into the huge, dark place. Although nothing could be clearly seen, he knew that

ever so many old clocks were striking the hour. One big fellow was rippling out the Westminster quarters while several others were slowly hitting their mellow gongs. When the symphony ceased, a cuckoo-clock blithely mocked its grave companions. Edward counted the cuckoo-calls and found it was nine o'clock.

He started. Nine o'clock. And the last train to Demehaven left Bulford at nine thirty-two. To pick up his luggage at "The Bulcaster Arms" and to reach the station would take half-an-hour. He began groping along the corridor, meaning to bawl out a hasty farewell and to promise that he would call again in the morning. Suddenly, however, a bright thought leapt up to his brain: and, when Coggin re-appeared carrying a hand-lamp, Redding went straight to the point.

"Look here, Slogger," he cried. "I have an idea. There's no limit, y'know, to my impudence. I invited myself to dinner, and I've drunk up all your best wine. Now I'm going to invite myself to pass the night here as well."

Coggin nearly dropped his lamp. "Mr. Edward," he said, "you don't mean it?"

At dinner the furniture-broker, helped by the dimness of the room and by the consciousness that he had scored a signal success, both as cook and as host, had gradually lost the sense of inferiority, and had poured out his thoughts to the clergyman's son almost on equal terms. Now, however, after five minutes of diligence upstairs as a chambermaid, he was once more Mr. Edward Redding's very humble and obedient servant. He had descended the stairs, hotly ashamed of his off-hand presumption in taking it for granted that Mr. Oswald Redding, Master of Arts, sometime Rector of Bulford, husband of Sir Adrian Shrivenham's haughty daughter, and a great scholar and traveler, would ever come and hob-nob at his second-hand table and swallow his auction-room wines, and even sleep under his makeshift roof.

"I do mean it, Slogger," said Edward, still more heartily. "To tell you the truth, I meant to catch the last train to Demehaven and to sleep there. You see I didn't know I could sponge on you for a room. Yes or no? My father's room, of course; because I've come to Bulford in his place. Any shakedown will do."

Coggin recovered his composure and asked: "Hadden't you better see the room first? It might not . . . quite suit you, Mr. Edward."

"I tell you any old truckle-bed will do. But confound it! Here's a bother. My things! They're all packed up at 'The Bulcaster Arms,' and the bill's paid. How shall I get them here? You see, Slogger, I'm forming a plan for dealing with Rambury, Tranter & Woodley, and it's most desirable that they should not know where to find me."

"That's easy," Coggin answered. "My young assistant is calling here at nine, for to-morrow's instructions. Scribble him a note for the landlord and he shall bring your luggage here without a word to anybody. There, he's ringing the bell now. You'll find pen and paper in the dining-room, in the drawer of the little table."

He strode off through the chapel to open the door. Two minutes later the messenger was on his way to the inn, and Coggin once more began leading the way to what his visitor called "The Redding Chamber." At each awkward turn of the stairs a candle burned on a wall-bracket, and there were two candles on the landing. It was a strange climb. As the old chapel did not afford much wall-space between its many windows, most of the oil-paintings which Coggin had acquired at sales were hung on the landing and stairs. These works were mainly old over-varnished copies of pictures by Raphael, Murillo, Rubens, Rembrandt, and Titian, and had been bought for less than the value of their massive frames. By candle-light they made a grand show.

The master of the house threw wide a door and stood back on the landing, so that his guest might pass alone into the bed-chamber. But Edward Redding had hardly advanced three steps from the door-side when he cried out and fell back.

"Where are you, Coggin?" he demanded, almost angrily, as if a trick had been played upon him.

"I am here," said Coggin quietly.

They went into the room together. With another human being close beside him, Redding's fear left him. After the soft richness of the stairs and landing, with deep carpets under his feet, and with dull gold and warm brown and cheerful red and heavenly blue covering nearly every inch of the walls, he had expected a bed-chamber almost like the boudoir of a royal favorite; and the first glimpse of the reality frightened him.

The Redding Chamber measured about twelve feet by ten. No carpet lay on the polished boards of the floor. A narrow iron bedstead stood behind the door, and Edward saw that the sheets though spotless, were coarse. There was a mat beside the bed. On one wall, facing the head of the bed, hung a great crucifix, fully three feet high. On the other walls were several religious paintings and engravings—an Assumption, a Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, an Ecce Homo, a Miraculous Draught of Fishes, and a poor portrait of Pio Nono. As for furniture, it comprised simply the bed, a table, a chest of drawers, a corner wash-stand, two chairs, a bookshelf, and a home-made *prie-dieu*. The drawn curtains were of unbleached linen.

Edward Redding took up a candle from the table and cast its light along the titles of the volumes in the shelf. Having read the words *De Imitatione Christi*, "The Garden of Piety," *Breviarium Romanum*, "The Life of St. Charles Borromeo," he put the candle down in a hurry.

"I was afraid this room would n't do," said Coggin.

"Of course it will do. I hate feather beds and dusty hang-



ings. But come, come, Slogger. You 've worked up a rather fanciful picture of my poor old guv'nor in your own mind. Now I think of it, he 's a saint, without doubt. He simply lives for other people, and never lets her know he 's disappointed when my mother upsets his plans by some sudden move. Still, he is n't this sort of a saint. No bones sticking out through his hair-shirt, no scourging himself, no hard peas in his boots, you know."

"I think he might like this little room," persisted Coggin, humbly. "But what about yourself, Mr. Edward? Hark! There 's the luggage."

"This is my room, if you 'll give it me, for at least a week and perhaps longer," Redding answered. "If I can't have this, I 'll snooze on a sofa in the chapel. Give your messenger this half-crown. When he 's off the premises, we 'll bring the luggage up. I 'll wait here."

Within half-an-hour Coggin had placed his guest's luggage in the Redding Chamber and had also carried up two large rugs, an arm-chair, and a wonderful little writing-desk with lock-up drawers. When everything was in order, the host set a match to the shavings and the old knobs of wood in the grate. A lively fire soon began to chuckle in their faces, and the two young men settled down beside it.

"You have done the talking to-night, Harry Coggin," Redding said. "Now, do some listening. I won't be long; because I know you keep early hours and you work hard.

"I 'm not as clever as you are, Harry Coggin, but I have the advantage of bringing a fresh eye to your affairs. You have grown stale. Now, my father's instructions are to get you out of Bulford. Me you would refuse. Him you will obey.

"Certain persons want to drive you away from this town. You are going away; but they shall pay you for going—and



pay you jolly well too. They shall eat humble-pie, plenty of it, with no old Madeira to wash it down.

"To-day I have spent three hours on the river, thinking. Remember that, while I was sculling and puzzling, puzzling and sculling, I knew nothing about the concerts. Only the pictures, the Constables. Let me ask you what is your theory about that affair. To save time, I'll state a theory now, and you'll say if it agrees with your own.

"Venn-Venning, unknown to you, had made ducks and drakes of his second fortune and sold his bequest of pictures. From some unprincipled dealer with whom he was doing business, he borrowed or begged these clever forgeries. He hoped simply to cheat you with them. When you asked for a receipt in definite terms he was frightened. But he simply had to have money, to fly to France. One more fraud did not matter greatly. So he signed and took your cash. Then you turned your back. He seized his chance and altered the receipt."

"Of course, Mr. Edward. But is this a theory? Isn't it only the facts?"

"Perhaps so. But listen carefully. We are agreed, are we, that the episode of the receipt had not been premeditated by him?"

"It could n't have been. He could n't have guessed that I would put a receipt where he could put his hands on it again."

"Quite so. Excuse such obvious comments. Now we'll get on. Bully Tranter drifted in here to buy decanters and saw the pictures? Drifted, I say."

Redding paused. Coggin said nothing.

"Then Bully Tranter knocked up against Rambury Secundus, quite by chance, and said he'd seen two Constables here. Quite by chance, I say."

Again he paused. Again there was no answer.

"Rambury bought. No haggling. Too busy to examine the

picture. Relied on your guarantee. Just like the Ramburys, ah—careless, impulsive, happy-go-lucky, generous creatures?”

There was no reply.

“Now for Brassington. Those London solicitors—did they ever tell you Brassington’s address?”

“Yes . . . no. When I come to think of it, they did n’t. Is it usual?”

“Did Rambury know Brassington before they made common cause against you?”

“I cannot say.”

“Have I hinted plainly enough at my theory, Coggin? Don’t be afraid to answer. I am bound to speak gravely. My visit to Bulford is to be the turning-point in your life. Speak.”

“You mean,” said Coggin, after a long time, “did anybody put it into Mr. Venn-Venning’s head that he should come here? Or, did somebody who had got to know that I had been swindled merely take advantage of my misfortune? You mean: Has there been a conspiracy against me?”

“Exactly. Yes or no?”

“I have no proof.”

Redding was about to dissent. But he checked himself and sat still for a few moments shading his eyes with one hand from the brightness of the fire. At length he asked quietly:

“If it were proved, what would you do, Harry Coggin? I don’t ask if you would take revenge. But would you invoke justice? Would you feel bound to punish the guilty and to cut a foul ulcer out of the poor body of this ancient town? I’ve told you already that my father wants you away from Bulford forever. If I can lead you out of it in triumph; if I can set your feet on a new path towards success and happiness in the profession you love; and if, without injustice or excessive severity, I can obtain reparation from those who

have sought to blast your life, will you give up this chapel and this business and follow me?"

Coggin shrank back afraid. In throwing down the challenge, Edward Redding had abandoned his teasing manner, and his voice had deepened until it sounded in the listener's ears just like that other voice which Coggin would have followed to the end of the world.

Suddenly Edward Redding got up and extinguished the candles. Wheeling his arm-chair out of the firelight he demanded again, in tones still more like his father's:

"Will you? Don't think of me. Try to imagine it is my father sitting here, my father speaking, my father asking. Will you, Harry Coggin?"

Harry Coggin answered: "Yes."

## CHAPTER V

**H**UNDREDS of singing-birds awakened Edward Redding before five o'clock the next morning. He rolled out of bed and made the curtain rings rasp on their brass pole. Thrusting his head through the open window he could have shouted for joy. Below him lay a young orchard running down a slope; and at the bottom, about a hundred yards distant, flowed the sparkling river. Overnight he had never suspected that he was on the outskirts of Bulford, with never a house between his nostrils and the sweet vale of the Deme.

Just under the window, in a tiny yard overhung by the nearest trees of the orchard, a roughly dressed man was moving about softly. It was Coggin with a pail of water in each hand.

"Heavens, Slogger," Edward called out. "What are you up to?"

"Your bath," Coggin answered, meekly, and he vanished into the house.

Edward Redding opened his bedroom door to expostulate. He nearly fell over a large empty foot-bath, and half a minute later his host, carrying a full bucket, appeared on the landing.

"There's no bathroom," Coggin explained. "You see I always run down through the orchard and take a plunge in the Deme."

"Not in winter?"

"Winter and summer."

"The devil you do! Going this morning?"

"Yes. I sha'n't be long away, Mr. Edward."

"Hold on. Look here, I'm coming too."

He jerked back into his room, slammed the door, hastily put on his boots and clothes and rolled up a towel. As St. Michael's big clock thumped five the two young men were climbing the fence of the orchard. There was no gate.

"Hope this is n't Rambury's orchard we're trespassing in," muttered Redding.

"No. I have permission to use the path," Coggin answered. "I pay a few shillings a year rent for the bit of ground my bathing-hut stands on."

He shewed a key with which, a minute later, he unlocked a little cabin of tarred wood, set snugly between the trunks of four cherry trees. Coggin made his visitor use the hut; and long before Redding was undressed he heard a great splash and knew that Coggin was in the water.

The morning sun had not yet warmed the air, and when Redding had made only half his run towards the river bank he felt like turning back again. But he trotted on and made the plunge gamely.

"I was just thinking," said a voice in his ear as he came to the surface, "that the first time you ever spoke to me was in the water, like this, only it was the canal. Do you remember, Mr. Edward?"

Coggin was supporting himself by a quiet stroke or two, now and then, and his tones were as easy as if he had been sitting in a chair by a warm fire-side. He was like a fish in water. Redding, however, felt as if he had been pitched into a bed of nettles. Next came a sensation as of toothache all over his body. He tried to answer, but could only sputter and gasp.

"Go back and rub yourself down," cried Coggin earnestly, "you've had enough for the first day. Do please go."

The novice floundered ashore. While he was drying himself his teeth chattered like ivory dice rattling in a box.



Coggin swam and sported for five minutes more; and yet he was fully dressed before the door of the cabin opened. A flannel shirt, corduroy trousers, a belt, and a rough jacket did not take long to put on; nor was it a great task to thrust bare feet into a pair of clogs.

"What is next on the program in this incredible life of yours, Slogger?" the guest asked, as they reëntered the house. "Grub, I hope."

"Shave and wash," replied the host. "Here's your hot water. Breakfast in twenty minutes. Then a gallop."

He gave Redding a steaming can, and having filled another for himself, walked away to his own quarters. Edward sought the stairs. On the way, he espied through an open door a room which the darkness had concealed from him the night before. It had been the principal room in the old Sunday school, and now it was a library and music-room, which housed two or three thousand books, about twenty pictures, and two good pianos. Redding, although he had inherited very little of his father's bookishness, could not resist the temptation to walk in and look at the shelves. He perceived at once that most of the volumes were of small account; but in a spacious case against the furthest wall were arranged about five hundred good and valuable books, well-bound and well-preserved.

At breakfast Coggin still wore his rough clothes, but he had put on a collar and had changed his clogs for boots. The meal stood in strong contrast with the delicate and leisurely dinner of the night before. Indeed, if his appetite had not been sharpened by the walk and the swim, Redding might have shrunk from the coarse brown table-cloth, the thick mugs, the peasant's knives and platters, the gammon of bacon and the big cottage loaf which met his eyes. But the piping-hot coffee, with plenty of new milk, put him into great spirits, and he devoured his bread and bacon with relish.

"What 's this about a gallop?" he asked, after the second slice.

"My business takes me all over the country side," Coggin explained, "so I need a horse. On days when I 'm not going to use him, I try to give him a little run before breakfast. Provided it 's very early in the morning, the groundsman at the race-course lets me go there. You shall gallop Bay Rum to-day, Mr. Edward."

"We 'll take turns. I 'm nearly ready. Yes, just half a cup more. One thing though, Slogger, before we start. You must swear that my being here sha'n't make any difference to your arrangements. You must n't alter a single appointment, or make any special fuss at meals."

"I always breakfast like this, and there will be only cold beef and cheese at mid-day," said Coggin. "As for business, I 'm not going to sales just now."

"Why? Oh, I 'm truly sorry, Slogger. You mean you haven't the capital? Those damned pictures? Still, it 's just as well. We don't want to buy any more stock. We 're selling off. Enormous reductions. Many lots positively below cost. Owner leasing the neighborhood. Remember. You gave me a promise last night. I 'm in deadly earnest. Now, where 's the gee-gee?"

Coggin made haste to lead the way, evidently jumping at the chance of evading debate. They passed through the airy chapel just as the clocks were tapping and tinkling and ding-ing and dong-ing the hour of six. When they gained the street they found it deserted.

A short sharp whistle from Coggin was answered by the creaking of a door a few yards off, and a cheerful youngster appeared leading Bay Rum, a very handsome Cleveland bay, who greeted his owner with much pawing and neighing. Coggin, however, made the boy mount and sent him cantering

on in front, promising to catch him up by a short path through the fields.

"You can do anything you like, Mr. Edward, with Bay Rum," said Coggin, when they arrived at the lonely race-course. "Walk him, gallop, put him at that white fence—it will be all agreeable to Bay Rum."

"Now look here, Slogger," confessed Redding. "The shameful truth is I've turned muff. I'm only a fool of an artist now-a-days. Think how I funk'd the water an hour ago. Have your gallop; and when Bay Rum isn't quite as fresh we'll come back to the subject. I mean it."

Coggin leapt into the saddle. His clumsy clothes could not hide the litheness of his limbs and the grace of his movements. He and Bay Rum went off like the wind. As they reached the far side of the field, Edward Redding felt just one prick of mortification. Thirteen years before he had once ridden his own pony on this very turf. At that time Harry Coggin was sorting rubbish in a marine-store. Yet here stood he, Redding, all soft and nervous, while Coggin and Bay Rum, like a jockey and a race-horse on Bulford Cup-day, tore along with a thundering of hoofs, hugging the white railings. But he did not allow the pique to last. Mounting Bay Rum in his turn he made a creditable show, and felt the better for it in soul and body.

"*Solvitur gallopendo*," he chuckled, as he dismounted. "Here is my program. If some land-grabber has n't blocked it up, there's a track from near the Grand Stand through the meadows to Broken Bridge. I'm an old man now, with a failing memory; but I'd swear Broken Bridge is not a mile away. Half a mile further on stands Leffington Station, on the Demehaven railway. I'm going to tramp it to Leffington. I shall come into Bulford by train, and to-night I shall go out of Bulford by train, too. Only I shall get out at Leffington,

and work home by the riverside, and get back to your kitchen by way of that path through the orchard. That is . . . if you'll have me. Don't expect me for lunch. And mind you begin packing up. I 'm off."

## CHAPTER VI

**E**ITHER the hand of Providence or an amazing bit of luck delivered the enemy into Edward Redding's hands even before he had given up his ticket from Leffington to the collector at Bulford Station. Gaping at the little book-stall stool Bully Tranter, as lumpish as ever. Redding's first impulse was to dodge him; but second thoughts, pressing hard on the first, bade him seize his opportunity.

Tranter's heavy countenance lightened with sincere delight as soon as his sluggish wits had accomplished the task of recollecting his old school-mate. This joy did not spring from any affection for Edward Redding. It was merely his immense pleasure at having somebody to talk with whose topics would be of boyish caliber. Tranter had attained the age of twenty-six, and wore a beard and long side-whiskers, but he had not put away childish things, and he preferred the past to the present.

"Do you do anything, Tranter?" asked Redding, who remembered that Tranter's family were not reputed opulent. "Are you a lawyer, architect, prize-fighter, doctor, tripe-dresser, poet, gas-fitter, or what? Perhaps you 're a peer of the realm. Met Puffer Batwood the other day and found he was a baronet."

"I live with my aunt," replied the huge young man's small voice.

"That 's all? A self-sacrificing profession. Sometimes a lucrative one. But what are you doing this morning? You 're not living with your aunt in front of this bookstall, are you?"



"I 've come to buy a paper for my aunt."

Redding scrutinized the flabby giant narrowly. The plan which he had suddenly formed in his mind was a tremendously risky one. Failure would forewarn and forearm Coggin's foes, and they might triumph after all. He hesitated. But not for long. Something told him that he had stumbled on one of the enemy's key positions, and that by a bold rush he might become master of the entire situation. He decided to attack.

"Then leave the paper at auntie's, if it is n't far from here," he said, "and then, as you 've nothing to do, why not join me in a prowl for an hour or so, and tell all about Bulford and the Bulfordites?"

Tranter was delighted. On the way to his aunt's house in Hanover Grove he chatted like a child, wandering from one story to another and repeatedly taking it for granted that his auditor knew who was who, even in the most complicated narratives of quite recent events. Redding wore the air of an interested listener; but he was intent upon his plan. Without naming the goal he drew Tranter out of the busier streets through the quiet shade of Beech Lane. In twenty minutes they had reached the spot which suited Redding's tactics.

"Why, we 're at Madman's Leap!" cried Tranter.

Madman's Leap was Bulford's great natural curiosity. A small headland or cliff of sandstone, as sheer as a wall, descended into a tiny lake. On the opposite shore rose a magnificent oak-tree; and there was a legend that some dare-devil youth had lost his life in trying to spring from the brink of the cliff to a great limb of the tree growing out over the narrow water. A rustic bench had been placed well back from the edge.

The two climbers were hardly seated when Tranter's tongue began wagging again. He had a silly bubbling laugh which made a good part of his reminiscences unintelligible. At last,

however, Redding cocked his ears. The name of Rambury Secundus was pronounced with reverence. Then followed an admiring account of Rambury's cleverness, Rambury's wonderful wife from London, Rambury's singing, Rambury's properties, Rambury's great acquaintances. It was evident that Tranter felt honored by any kind of association with Rambury.

"What about Coggin, Harry Coggin, who won the Scholarship?" asked Redding suddenly.

"Coggin? Have n't you heard? Go on! Everybody knows. Coggin's done brown, fairly done brown at last. By Jove, I must tell you. Tremendous fun."

He gurgled and bubbled out a spiteful version of the story which Redding had heard from the victim's own lips the night before—the concerts, the pictures, and even the present impecuniosity of Coggin.

"You seem glad he's come to grief, Tranter," said Redding, controlling himself.

"Of course I'm glad. There was far too much fuss made over that dirty little old-clo' boy. He would n't keep his place. Actually thought he could join the Choral Society. He's done now, anyhow; done brown."

The moment had come.

Tranter was sitting at the end of the bench, his elbow resting on the curved rustic-work. Redding arose; turned to face Tranter; planted one knee on the bench so as to pen Tranter in closely; and then spoke.

"Mr. Tranter," he said, in subdued but terrible tones, "hark to me. At school I despised you. We called you Bully Tranter. I despise you now. At six-and-twenty you simply sponge on your aunt. Yet here you are giggling out sneers at a man—d'ye hear?—at a man, a real man, whose boots you are n't fit to black. You miserable hound, I've half a mind to chuck you over the cliff."

Tranter tried to titter. But Redding's eyes were piercing him through, and the sound died on his lips. Surprise changed to stupefaction, and stupefaction to cringing terror.

"I . . . did n't mean it . . . Mr. Redding," he whimpered.

"Yes, you did, Bully Tranter, Coward Tranter. And I meant my words too. But I 'm not going to chuck you over the cliff just yet. You are going to tell me, here and now, who played that dirty trick against Coggin's concerts. Answer."

"I . . . don't know."

"You do. Answer. Or over the cliff you go, and a nice ducking you 'll have, and perhaps a broken head into the bargain."

"On my honor . . ."

"Your honor be damned."

Bully Tranter began to cry. He cried in a blubbering style which made him shake like an ill-made, top-heavy jelly. Redding's lip curled with contempt. He suddenly felt convinced, however, that the big cry-baby was indeed ignorant concerning the wrecker of the concerts. So he attacked in another place.

"Very well," he said, sharply. "The pictures. I suppose you 'll say, on your honor, you were not behind the scenes as regards the pictures? This time you 're going to answer me, Bully. Stop snuffling and speak up. I give you thirty seconds."

Tranter's lips worked, as if attempting to frame words. But instead of words came a moaning cry. At last he whined, "I can't, oh I can't!"

"Now look here," said Redding, rather less harshly. "You 've got to choose. You 're afraid that if you tell me you 'll get into trouble with . . . with Rambury. Guessed right, have n't I, Bully? Very well. But mark this. If you refuse to tell me . . . why, then you 'll have to reckon with Slogger Coggin. Do you think he 's going to sit down like

a lamb and let a cur like Rambury and a jack-ass like you conspire against him and ruin him? No, no, Bully, my boy. That is n't Slogger. He puts up with insults and injuries meekly a long time; but he explodes like Mount Vesuvius at last. Do you remember, Mr. Tranter, how he pitched Currington into the canal, and knocked you and Rambury Primus down like nine-pins, all in two minutes? He was only a boy then. He's a man now. Look out. He's going to put you all in prison. Or, if he can't do that, he'll come and nearly kill the lot of you."

Tranter put up a huge soft hand as if to ward away the first blow.

"Yes, Mr. Tranter. He'll nearly kill you. How will you like two black eyes? And your teeth knocked out? And a few ribs broken? And your neck wrung?"

The terrified giant, wrenching himself clear of his tormentor's knee, sprang up and tried to bolt. He did not waddle far. Redding, always fleet of foot, overtook him less than a dozen yards from the bench; and the runaway felt a strong hand gripping his coat collar and hard knuckles kneading his neck.

Edward Redding's wrath and scorn increased a hundred-fold at the touch of this lumping loafer's unwholesome flesh. He recalled Harry Coggin as he had seen him during these last twenty four hours—Coggin humbly mending arm-chairs, Coggin playing majestically on the organ, Coggin sitting over his wine like a gentleman of the old school, Coggin cooking like a cordon bleu, Coggin galloping round Bulford race-course, and, above all, Coggin's clean muscular limbs thrusting through the smarting water of the bright, cold river. To think, that Coggin, at this moment, was alone in his big chapel, eating his heart out, through the foul play of a lout like this! Edward Redding had not meant it when a few minutes before, he was threatening to tip Tranter over the brink of the little



cliff; but, all of a sudden, his palms itched to grab the wretched animal by seat and by scruff and to hurl him out of sight, like something that had gone bad.

"Don't try that on again," he commanded sternly, as he forced Tranter back into his old place on the bench. "If you do, I'll bundle you straight off to Slogger Coggin. I gave you thirty seconds. The time's more than up. Out with the whole truth."

By this time Tranter was crying gently with his whole great soft body. With a very large and gay silk handkerchief, which he constantly folded and re-folded into an oblong pad, he kept wiping his gray-green eyes. Redding saw that he had better abandon hope of extracting a clear confession from such a creature; so he proceeded to put a long series of questions, such as could be answered with a Yes or a No.

At the end of half-an-hour Redding could no longer harbor one lingering doubt. There had been a conspiracy against Coggin, and Albert Rambury was at the bottom of it. Redding, however, had a judicial mind at the back of his whimsical manner and he knew that, despite his inward persuasion of Rambury's guilt, he had elicited no substantial proofs. He soon perceived that, while Tranter had knowingly acted as cat's-paw, Rambury had been the soul of prudence, and that he could not be compromised by anything Tranter might say. The plot had evidently been diabolical in its cold-blooded cleverness and completeness.

When nearly five minutes had elapsed without a further question from Redding, Tranter began:

"I did n't think. I never thought. I did n't . . ."

"Hold your tongue," rapped out Redding. "Speak when I ask you to. Don't you see I'm thinking?"

His thoughts lasted a long while. But at last he slapped the bench and grunted: "Good! Now then, I can't sit here all day. Get up. Come along."



“Not to Slogger Coggin’s?” squealed Tranter.

“No. Not yet, anyhow. Perhaps never, so long as you ’ll do exactly what I tell you. Look here, Bully, to tell the truth I ’m a bit sorry for you. You can’t help being a damned fool, can you?”

“No, I can’t,” agreed Tranter meekly.

“Well, I suspect you ’ve been dragged into this and you weren’t man enough to back out of it. But mark me well. There ’s only one condition on which I can ask Coggin to let you off prison and to leave some whole bones in your body. It ’s this. You helped to get Coggin into disgrace. Now, will you help to get him out?”

“Oh, yes, yes!”

“Right. Now, we ’ll go and see your aunt. No, don’t be afraid. I sha’n’t tell her any details. You have simply to agree with all I say in her presence. If you don’t, I wash my hands of you.”

“No, no please,” wailed Tranter. “My aunt must n’t know anything.”

“She ’d have to know something, would n’t she, if they came to take you to prison? Or if they brought you home in bits on a stretcher, like sirloins of beef and legs of mutton on a butcher-boy’s tray? Trust me to manage it; and come along.”

## CHAPTER VII

**R**EDDING'S pleasant feeling of mastery weakened as he strode townward, and it had vanished entirely by the time Tranter unlatched the garden gate of Grove House. To dominate a bulky, pulpy, cowardly muff was child's play; but to tackle an elderly aunt, a house-holder, and probably as sour as vinegar, might be beyond his powers. The fine up-keep of the lawn and flower-beds disturbed him; and when he entered the house its air of perfect management filled him with dismay.

This, however, was one of Edward's lucky days. While he was waiting in the morning-room for Miss Tranter to appear, his glance fell on a pile of magazines, dated June, which had been delivered at the house only a few minutes before his arrival. It was evident that Miss Tranter was a reader. A familiar design on the cover of one of these periodicals caught Redding's eye. Snapping up the magazine, he turned its pages until he found what he sought—a half-page wood-cut with the words *Edward Redding del.* underneath in the left-hand corner. It was a drawing in which the draughtsman had felt pride and pleasure; and the engraver had risen to the occasion.

Standing engrossed in the comparison of his own drawing with the wood-engraver's version, Edward Redding did not notice the entrance of a handsome, good-tempered, well-dressed woman. Indeed, the softly-moving lady had sailed almost to his elbow when he dropped the magazine with a start and stammered his excuses.

"I am going to call you Teddie, as in the old days," said the lady, smiling adorably.

"Why . . . it's Mrs. Hilliard," gasped Edward.

"Of course it is. You look splendid, Teddie. Dear me, how you do remind me of your poor father. When he first came to Bulford he looked just as you look now. And how is he? And your dear mother?"

After Edward had answered these questions, and had playfully reminded Mrs. Hilliard of the many occasions on which he had been secretly haled into old Glebe Lodge house, for sherry and cake, he tried to explain himself. "I have taken the liberty of calling on Miss Tranter," he said.

"Miss Tranter?" echoed the lady, puckering a smooth brow under her silver hair. "Oh, I see, I see! You've made a mistake. You've concluded my nephew Alfred Tranter's aunt must be a Miss Tranter. Now why? Haven't you a maternal aunt yourself, Teddie? And must every aunt be an old maid? Are all your own aunts spinsters, and are they all surnamed Redding?"

"I'm very stupid," confessed Redding. "But," he added gallantly, "I'm also very lucky to find you instead of a Miss Tranter. The first beauty who captured my young heart was Mrs. Hilliard of Glebe Lodge."

"Mrs. Hilliard of Sherry and Cake," said the lady correcting him. "And I notice I was only the first. Who is the last, I wonder? You are evidently of a romantic disposition, poor Teddie; for didn't I catch you gloating over a picture of lovers in this magazine? I can find the very page. I saw it over your shoulder. Yes, here it is. Eileen and Algernon burning a letter, while somebody—I think it must be Sir Guy—can be seen through the open window galloping away in the sunset. Well, well! I guessed, chapters and chapters ago, that Eileen would—oh!"

Mrs. Hilliard's roving eye had suddenly encountered the legend *Edward Redding del.* The magazine dropped out of her hand; but before the artist could stoop to pick it up, she

had clutched it again. Rolling it up tightly with her strong white fingers, she whacked Redding smartly across the shoulders.

"You young rascal," she cried.

She tripped off to the window, where the morning sunlight was strong, and examined the picture more closely. Seen through the rose-colored glasses of her motherly fondness for Teddie, it became a master-piece in her eyes. She poured out twenty questions. How had he won fame so early? Did he send pictures to the Royal Academy Exhibition? Could he paint cats from life; and, if so, would he paint Scornor, the proudest and handsomest pussy-cat in all Bulford? Who was his model for Eileen, and had the real-life young lady truly got such wonderful tresses of hair? And did he know what was the end of the story? Was it a false alarm that Eileen had been sentenced by the family physician to an early death from consumption?

"Even if I had been shewn the rest of the MS. or proofs," answered Teddie, with dignity, "my lips would be sealed. All I can say is that my next and last drawing will depict Eileen, in the pink of health and with a wedding-ring on her finger, nestling against Algernon on the terrace of a hotel by the Rhine, just as a full moon has worked itself behind a ruined castle on a vine-clad hill. To the left a door is opening, as if the waiter is about to bring in sherry and cake."

"Sherry and cake," Mrs. Hilliard echoed, "oh, I remember, you were always greedy."

"No, madam. Always hungry."

"Hungry and greedy. Well, it happens you've come in the very nick of time. I expected the new curate of St. Peter's and his wife to luncheon. They've just sent word they can't come. I insist on your taking their place."

"Not place, ma'am. Places. I shall make up for both of them. And I am honored and flattered by the invitation.



This morning I have all the luck. I came here on distasteful business and it is turning into delightful pleasure."

"Ah! I'd forgotten. You wanted to see Alfred's aunt—Miss Tranter as you called her. Out with your business. Get it over. Is Alfred in a scrape? Don't be afraid of upsetting me. So long as it's nothing dishonorable I should be delighted to hear he's been up to mischief. But I sha'n't believe it. He has n't the spirit. Alfred's just a great baby, tied to his auntie's apron-strings."

"I am compelled to disappoint you," Redding answered. And, speaking slowly with many pauses, he went on: "Alfred has not exactly been up to mischief. But certain persons appear to have dragged him into an affair which may turn out annoying and expensive, for him and for them."

"Alfred with bad companions?" asked the incredulous lady.

"Not in the ordinary sense. His associates in this business would all be called highly respectable citizens," replied Redding.

"I am baffled," said Mrs. Hilliard, beginning to be anxious. A long and awkward pause followed.

"Mrs. Hilliard," burst out Teddie, "I am going to tell you everything. If you had been Miss Tranter—the Miss Tranter I imagined—instead of your true, wise, good kind self, I couldn't have risked it. Can you spare me half-an-hour? And can you send Alfred right out of the way till I've done?"

Alfred was summoned. The whiskered giant sidled into the room fearfully, his poor little eyes both bright with fresh tears. When he had received nothing worse than a command to go into town and match some wool for his aunt, he almost gamboled down the garden path, like a frisky elephant.

Edward Redding began his tale. On first pronouncing the name of Coggin he glanced at his auditor nervously; for he knew that Mrs. Hilliard was of the straiter Bulford set. The lady heard him, however, without one pout. Indeed her at-

tention was so close and her sympathy so evident that the young man's tongue was loosened; and when he warmed up to an eloquent arraignment of Coggin's torturers her fine brown eyes grew dim.

"It is a shame, a shame," she cried, as the story ended. "I know this Coggin. When my husband died, and I could no longer bear to live at Glebe Lodge, I remembered how your dear father had suffered for the poor boy, and I sent for him to clear away some lumber. His civility and honesty and intelligence and industry impressed me so deeply that I gradually found myself giving the whole work of the removal and the re-furnishing into his hands. He was extraordinary. Why, he even advised me about the wines, which to keep and which to sell; and when I stumbled on a note-book Mr. Hilliard had made, it turned out that young Coggin had given me advice which was not only sound but disinterested. No wonder people are jealous of him. What you say disgusts me. I thought the young man was succeeding well. You see, I don't hear much about Bulford doings. And now, Teddie, tell me what you want me to do."

"I want you," Redding answered, without a moment's hesitation, "to let me send Alfred to-morrow morning to France."

"Alfred . . . France!" Mrs Hilliard almost shrieked these two proper names. Then she gurgled "Oh," in so strange a tone that Redding could n't tell whether she was terribly frightened or overwhelmingly amused. He added eagerly:

"It sounds mad, but it is n't. Please, do trust me. A friend of mine shall pilot him across London, and the English clergyman shall keep an eye on him in Boulogne. Early next week he ought to be back, with a just action to his credit. Alfred shall come to no harm. Besides, apart from his doing the right thing by Coggin, we must make a man of him. We must give him responsibility. Pardon my impertinence;

but sending Alfred to France to clear the honor of an injured man strikes me as a better prescription than sending him to Belling & Belling's to match your coral-pink wool. Say that you consent."

Mrs. Hilliard rose as he finished speaking. "Please excuse me," she said, rather coldly. "The gardener is waiting for me. Here is the morning paper. I will answer your request after luncheon."

Redding bowed to her submissively as he passed out of the room. He closed the door behind her gently and loitered back to the window, half afraid that he had blundered. At that moment Bully Tranter reached the garden gate. With one of his big paws he fumbled the latch, and in the other he warmed a hank of scarlet wool, having lost his bit of coral-pink on the outward journey. Teddie heard him open and shut the front door, heard him stumbling against the umbrella-stand in the hall, heard him lumping upstairs. Five minutes later a bell rang and Mrs. Hilliard appeared.

"Luncheon is ready," she said, "and Alfred may go to France."

As Edward Redding was a luxury-loving young man, Mrs. Hilliard's dining-room consoled and refreshed him. Dinner at Harry Coggin's had been a memorable and edifying experience, but it was pleasant to be seated again amidst the conventional, yet ever-delightful refinements of his own class. The meal having been planned for a married curate, might have been called too solid; and on such a warm day, Edward would gladly have exchanged the old Volnay for a light claret; but the silver laugh of the hostess and her delicate ironies about the guest's romantic drawings made the luncheon as light as omelettes and as sprightly as champagne.

Hardly giving the young men time to eat their cheese, Mrs.

Hilliard suddenly rose and said: "Mr. Redding wants to tell you something, Alfred. I approve of the arrangement."

As soon as they were left alone, Redding turned to Tranter, who had begun to heap his plate with horribly mangled Brazil nuts, and announced:

"Mr. Alfred Tranter, you will catch the nine o'clock train to London to-morrow morning. You will be met by my friend Tony Corbett, who will give you something to eat at a chop-house or at his club. Mr. Corbett will afterwards put you in another train. You are going to France—to Boulogne. Don't goggle at me like that. In Boulogne you will shew an addressed envelope, which I shall give you, to the first cabby you meet. He will take you to the Hotel de l'Espagne. The landlord speaks English. Without loss of time you will report yourself to the English clergyman. He will tell you where to find my friend Paul Grandet, a painter, who also speaks English. With Monsieur Grandet you will seek out Mr. Frederick Venn-Venning."

Although Redding paused after pronouncing Venn-Venning's name, Tranter uttered no word or sound. He sat as one petrified.

"From Mr. Venn-Venning," Redding continued, "you will obtain a full confession. It must be in writing, and it must be sworn before the British consul. If he refuses or even hesitates, or if he writes out a statement which does not absolutely clear Coggin's character, you are not to coax him. You are simply to tell him that Slogger Coggin and Teddie Redding will come to Boulogne at once. If he runs away to Brussels or Homburg or Spa or any of his other haunts, we shall hunt him down. Make it plain to him that he will be publicly thrashed and that Slogger will nearly kill him, even if we must go to the Ural mountains to do it. Further, after we have assaulted and battered him, we shall hand him over to Justice. If, on the other hand, he will straightforwardly acknowledge



his guilt you may assure him that we shall not be revengeful; and if, after reading his confession, we find that some other person or persons had a hand in the affair, we shall inflict the chief punishment on the most culpable party. I repeat that you must not argue with Venn-Venning. And don't waste a moment. Refuse absolutely to give time for consideration. Don't say that Slogger and I are in Bulford. Let him fear we are close at hand. The moment you succeed or fail, send a long telegram to Coggin, furniture dealer, Bulford, England. Then come straight back here."

Redding paused again. Tranter remained as voiceless and motionless as a tailor's dummy. He was roused, however, by the return of Mrs. Hilliard.

"Well?" asked the lady, "is all settled?"

"I have told your nephew what I wish him to do, and he has not made the slightest objection," Redding answered. "He starts to-morrow, early. With your leave, ma'am, I will accompany him to his room and give him some advice while he packs his things."

The first words emitted by Bully Tranter concerning his errand were spoken in the bedroom. "Do you think," he asked meekly, "these will be enough shirts?"

Redding looked into the deep drawer. While he was turning over about two dozen garments, ranging from winter shirts of flannel to evening shirts of pleated silk, Tranter knelt down, about as gracefully as a loaded camel, and began dragging ever so many pairs of boots and shoes from under the bed.

"You are going to Boulogne for less than a week," replied Redding. "You are not going to discover the North Pole or the source of the River Nile. Let me throw what you need on the bed. Meanwhile find the small things. Hair-brush, nail-brush, tooth-brush . . . Where's your razor?"

"I . . . I don't shave."

"Then it 's time you did. That ridiculous beard is the ruin of you. Handkerchiefs, collars, cravats . . . What about your pocket Bible? Here it is 'Presented to Alfred Tranter by his loving aunt Edith Hilliard.' Put it in. And mind you read it, you miserable sinner. If, when you come back, I find you haven't read Judges, Proverbs, and St. Mark I shall punch that fat head of yours—punch it hard. There you go putting your boots on top of your shirts without wrapping them in brown paper. Now, how do you stand for money? Have you twenty pounds handy?"

In the twinkling of an eye, Bully Tranter became a different man. Avarice stood next to indolence in his character. No longer drawling or whimpering, but speaking in sharp and businesslike tones he demanded:

"Surely I 'm not expected to pay my own expenses?"

"Have you twenty pounds handy?" repeated Redding.

"Yes. But . . ."

"If it 's in this room, shew me the money, please." Tranter's tone had hardened, but so had Redding's. The clergyman's son demolished his companion's new-found courage by one scorching glance. "You forget, Mr. Tranter," he added, "that you have not merely helped to blast Mr. Coggin's character. From his own lips I know that you have cost him hundreds of pounds. If you haggle . . . well, my terms will be altered. Shew me the money."

Bully Tranter broke down completely and began crying like a greedy little boy suddenly deprived of a plateful of jam tarts. With his great sleeve he thrice tried to wipe wet tears off the painted lid of a little money-box which he drew from some childish hiding-place. The miser displayed much skill in so extracting twenty sovereigns as not to shew the further extent of his hoard.

Young Redding had spent so much of his life on shipboard,

in railway trains and coaches, in hotels and inns, that he was a sophisticated traveler, and he almost weaned Alfred Tranter from despair by his natty little tricks for saving room in a portmanteau. While the packing went on, Redding carefully repeated his instructions, making Tranter repeat them until he knew the whole series by heart, like a lesson. It soon became plain that Mrs. Hilliard's nephew was not such a fool as it suited him to appear. Seizing upon a hint from Redding that, in certain eventualities, Rambury might have to refund the twenty pounds, Bully Tranter turned instantly into an ardent champion of Coggin and shewed tactful cunning in his suggestions for routing Rambury.

Edward Redding felt equally pleased with his progress and disgusted with Tranter. He divined that the contemptible creature would swing right round again to Rambury's side if by doing so he could bury a few more sovereigns in his money-box. This thought made Redding decide that Tranter must not be allowed to get into communication with any outside person before leaving Bulford next morning.

"What are you thinking about?" asked Bully Tranter timorously.

"About *you*," Redding answered. "Take notice. Unless your aunt is with you, you are not to set foot outside this house till I call in the morning to take you to the train. Now I must be off."

As Edward, twenty minutes later, closed the garden gate behind him, he felt much more than satisfied; for Mrs. Hilliard had not only undertaken to keep Alfred under her eye, but had cheerfully given her audacious visitor an almost incredible promise.

## CHAPTER VIII

**H**ARRY COGGIN happened to be filling a pail at the pump just as Edward Redding, who had climbed stealthily up the orchard, shewed his head over the fence.

"It is only four o'clock," said Coggin, greatly surprised.

"Thanks for the warm and exuberant welcome," retorted the guest. "I'll explain bye-and-bye. First of all, you might help me with these parcels."

One of the parcels was heavy, and Coggin knew, by the gurgle which came from it as he swung it over the fence, that there was a bottle of wine inside. It grieved him a little that his visitor should so soon requite his hospitality of the night before; but he said nothing.

In the spotless kitchen, the springs of Edward's impudence suddenly ran dry. The sentences which he had been rehearsing on the way home, fled from his brain. All he could do was to blurt out, with burning cheeks:

"Slogger, I've invited Mrs. Hilliard and her nephew to dinner this evening. And they've accepted. What are you going to do to me?"

For a moment, but for no longer, Coggin shewed that he was hurt. He was accustomed, however, to disappointments and to thrustings-aside; so he recovered himself quietly and answered:

"I had arranged our dinner; but of course I shall not mind dining alone. Mrs. Hilliard was a great friend of Mr. Redding's, I know. It is only natural you should wish to shew her respect."



“Good Heavens,” cried the other. “You misunderstand me. Surely you don’t imagine I could invite Mrs. Hilliard to dine with me at ‘The Bulcaster Arms’? I’ve . . . the truth is . . . I’ve . . . I’ve invited ’em to come and dine here. Here. At half-past seven. *Here*. Slogger, I give you my solemn word of honor that I had reasons, most important reasons. I’ll explain that later on. Of course I never thought she’d consent. I call it splendid of her. She’s a fine woman. Thinks the world of you, Slogger. Don’t look at me like that. You are not going to be hanged. Hooray, here’s some soup cooking! We can easily put some more hot water in it. And there’s a decent bit of cold salmon in this packet. A cold boiled fowl as well, and some cream tarts. By Jove, what’s the matter? Mrs. Hilliard is not young; but in my opinion she is still the stateliest and most beautiful woman in Bulford. You ought to feel highly honored.”

“The honor is too great,” replied Coggin, after a pause. And, speaking in his most precise manner, he added: “This is not the house and I am not the host for such a guest. Further . . . have you not forgotten who is her nephew? You say he is coming too.”

“Forgotten? Not likely. Her nephew is Bully Tranter. He is the first deserter from the enemy ranks to our side. Confound you, Slogger, you won’t trust me in the smallest thing. I’d better tell you my day’s work, here and now.”

On its mere contents and merits, Edward Redding’s recital would have been alarming to Harry Coggin. He did not receive it, however, into a critical brain; because he had been sustained for thirteen years by his supra-rational faith in the Reddings, father and son, as God’s instruments. More. In persuading so proud and dainty a lady as Mrs. Hilliard to come and dine familiarly with a marine-store dealer’s discredited son in a superannuated Dissenting Chapel, Edward

Redding had given proofs of such astounding boldness and power that there was more than a faint hope of his hurling even the formidable Rambury from his pedestal. So Harry simply surrendered himself to his champion's leadership, only stipulating that Redding should formally take the blame for the shortcomings of Coggin's home and table.

Disturbed only thrice by customers, who were all three easily pleased, the two young men gave themselves up to the honoring of Mrs. Hilliard. Harry claimed full control in the kitchen, while Edward Redding obtained leave to borrow whatever he liked from the stock-in-trade for the dignifying of the table. He availed himself of his opportunity to the utmost. A few months before, Coggin had bought, from a nobleman's house in the country, the remains of a magnificent Crown Derby dinner and dessert service. By breakages this had come down to less than one-third its original number of pieces; but there were still more than enough plates and dishes for a dinner party of only four persons. Redding was equally fortunate in discovering a sufficiency of fine old cut glass, once the property of Lady Creeve. As for *épergnes* and candelabra, the choice was embarrassing. Although Edward would have hated house-work as such, and would probably have smashed, through sheer carelessness, any common crockery which he might have been told to wash and dry, he loved the handling of rare china and old glass; and therefore he succeeded in polishing his finds to a brilliancy which Coggin himself had never dreamed of.

Mrs. Hilliard was even better than her word. She arrived, not by stealth but in a carriage drawn by two high-stepping roans. To Edward, who met her at the door, she said gaily:

"You thought I would change my mind? Not a bit of it. I am quite excited, after all you told me this morning. And think, Teddie . . . I don't mind you knowing that I am over fifty; yet I have never set foot in a chapel before."

To Harry, who awaited her modestly in the vestibule, the lady did not extend her hand, and perhaps there was the faintest tinge of condescension in her manner as she said:

"Mr. Coggin, I am truly pleased to see you again. Mr. Redding has told me of the wrong which has been done you. I am persuaded that my nephew, Mr. Tranter, was drawn by other persons into this discreditable affair, and I trust you will regard our visit this evening as signifying that we dissociate ourselves entirely from such dastardly proceedings. I remember with gratitude your honorable behavior after the death of my dear husband, and I trust you may soon be enjoying the respect and success you deserve."

"Amen," murmured Teddie Redding. The others looked shocked, and he knew he ought not to have said it; but the word broke the ice. How could Mrs. Hilliard maintain her intended aloofness in the presence of this mercurial young man? As the little procession moved along the chapel Teddie, from the force of habit and without meaning to be funny, performed one comical trick after another. On passing a piano-stool he smacked the round leather seat in such a way as to send it spinning upward on its bright spiral gear. He patted a stuffed fox on the head, and chucked under the chin a prudish-looking white marble bust representing Modesty.

The dining-room, fragrant with masses of white lilac, made Mrs. Hilliard clap her hands. Happily she did not examine the decorations of the chimney-piece, which included a chipped Worcester vase removed by Coggin from her own old house, Glebe Lodge. Nor did she know that her lips had often touched, at Lady Creeve's, the very glass into which Redding poured her Château Suduiraut.

The dinner which Coggin had planned earlier in the day was to have consisted simply of a *marmite printanière*, four lean cutlets, with sprigs of cauliflower steamed and then fried in butter, a piece of cheese, and a little jar of pre-

served fruits from China. Teddie's cold salmon and the roast fowl and the cream tarts extended the pleasant supper into an elaborate dinner; for Coggin carefully jointed the fowl and worked it up into a salmis according to a recipe he had often admired in an old French book.

"Don't expect to get Sauternes like this in Boulogne, Mr. Tranter," said Redding, dwelling fondly over the Château Suduiraut from Sir Peter Luxon's renowned cellar. And turning to Mrs. Hilliard, he added: "Madam, pardon me if I appear gluttonous with my fish. It is ages since I tasted a Deme salmon."

To be precise, the omnivorous young man had consumed a very large piece of Deme salmon only forty-nine hours before, in the company of Puffer Batwood. Yet he was not deliberately telling an untruth. His meal with Batwood already seemed years ago.

The banquet ran its course. Bully Tranter, in response to a dry cough from his aunt, turned to Coggin at the very beginning of the meal and sheepishly recited the agreed words: "Mr. Coggin, I am very sorry, and I will make the best amends in my power." Redding bridged over all the awkward pauses and gave the host droll help in bringing the cutlets and the salmis from the kitchen. He took pains, however, to safeguard the lady's dignity and to avoid familiarity. Mrs. Hilliard was not a prude; but to be a Bulford *grande dame* in 1864 involved a certain haughtiness, and Teddie did not for a moment fail to recognize the extraordinary broad-mindedness and large-heartedness of his stately guest in thus sitting down at the table of an old-clo' man's son in reparation for the wrong her nephew had wrought. Nor would the lady herself have tolerated any misunderstanding. There was a golden curb on her silvern laugh. She was at pains to speak of Redding as "Mr. Edward," and of the bearded Alfred as "my nephew, Mr. Tranter."



Although Coggin was duly conscious of this slight aloofness he did not resent it. He had never been one of those touchy upstarts who nurse bitterness against their social superiors on account of the very little which is withheld, rather than gratitude for the very much which is given. Indeed, he would have felt himself in a false and uncomfortable position if his visitors had sought to gloss over every inch of the social difference which undoubtedly existed. Yet, while exhibiting proper respect and deference, Hary Coggin kept himself free from the cringing manner which had so greatly annoyed the Reddings in the old days. At the very outset Mrs. Hilliard observed the exquisite cleanliness of the young man's toil-roughened hands, the clearness of his skin, the brightness of his eyes, the neatness of his unfashionable clothes. Nor could she help marveling at the breadth of his knowledge. When Edward Redding, for example, could not remember the name of a Spanish cathedral with a remarkably wide vaulted nave, Coggin instantly said "Gerona"; and when Mrs. Hilliard failed to recollect the author of a new novel called "Emilia in England," which was just then being discussed in Bulford, he modestly reminded her that it was by a Mr. George Meredith. He was also able to say which museums and picture-galleries contained certain statues and paintings mentioned by Redding.

"You must be quite a traveler, Mr. Coggin," said Mrs. Hilliard.

"On the contrary, ma'am," Coggin answered. "I have never spent a night out of Bulford."

So completely did the lady succumb to the freshness of her surroundings and to the excellence of the wines and meats, that when Edward Redding opened the bottle of Perrier-Jouët, which was part of his own contribution to the feast, she exclaimed unguardedly: "What on earth would people

say if they knew I was drinking Champagne with three young gentlemen?"

An awkward pause ensued. In Bulford's vocabulary "gentleman" was a word of precise meaning and august associations. It connoted lineage, lands, leisure; or, at the very least, a blood-relationship with some titled and landed person. The word flew gaily enough from Mrs. Hilliard's lips; but a moment later, like a bird that has dashed against a telegraph wire, it fell maimed and dead to earth.

Teddie Redding came to the rescue. "If we are scandalizing this pious and virtuous town," he said, "let us swallow our wine and adjourn to Mr. Coggin's library which is lined with some millions of volumes of sermons by all the dullest and most respectable divines. There is a piano. We have time for a little music."

Mrs. Hilliard not only accompanied the young men to the library, but was even persuaded into performing on the piano-forte herself. She played an artless and useless morceau de salon called "The Sylph's Farewell," trimmed with silly shakes and runs. When this deed had been fully perpetrated and the applause had ceased, the three visitors exclaimed: "Now, Mr. Coggin."

Coggin felt troubled. He had entered the room intending to play Chopin's Nocturne in F Minor, but he knew that, once seated at the piano, he would let himself go, and that his massive playing would make his fair guest's gentle tinklings ridiculous. Suddenly his face brightened, and he asked:

"May I play the organ instead?"

"Do, please do," cried the lady. And Redding added:

"Mr. Tranter and I will take turns at the blowing."

Before Bully Tranter, who had dined extremely well, could begin bleating out a protest, Coggin made haste to say: "No, no, I have an arrangement."

He went out and set a little bell a-ringing, somewhere on the chapel roof. Although the sound was faint, it sufficed; for, a minute later, the clumsy boots of two boys were heard stamping on the gallery stairs. Picking up a silver-plated candelabrum, Redding illuminated Mrs. Hilliard's way into the chapel; and having placed the lights on a table, behind a small candle-screen of pleated silk, he seated himself beside her on an Empire settee. Meanwhile Mr. Tranter had slipped back into the dining-room, to make apologies to a neglected decanter of port and to atone for Mr. Redding's indifference to its claims.

Coggin played softly. Always considerate of others, he remembered the lateness of the hour and held back his thunderbolts. Turning to his favorite Handel he chose the best of the love-music in "Jephtha" and the chorus "Let no rash intruder" from "Solomon." His auditors, downstairs in the darkness, could not have named these compositions; but they were none the less subdued and softened by the wooing, tender strains. Indeed, without knowing exactly how it happened, Mrs. Hilliard found, when the music ceased, that she was holding Teddie Redding's hand.

"If you really meant it, Slogger, when you told Mrs. Hilliard you had never slept a night out of Bulford," said Redding, after the guests had departed, "I am bound to say it's a shame. What's more, I intend that you shall sleep out of Bulford on Saturday night. We will find another horse and start early on Saturday morning on our adventures."

They were washing up. Until that painful moment Teddie Redding had always believed that washing up was a short and easy job which scullery-maids could accomplish in five or ten minutes.

Coggin did not reply immediately. Having settled into a groove, he was dismayed at the thought of sleeping in a strange

bed. Yet he had fallen so completely under the mastery of his astounding young visitor that he did not presume to refuse. He merely asked: "How can I leave this place for the whole of Saturday? It is my busiest day."

"We shall put up a notice, 'Closed for Stocktaking,' " said Redding. "It will be quite truthful, because we shall take some of the stock with us. For example, we shall take another bottle of that most praiseworthy Sauternes."



## CHAPTER IX

**F**ORTY miles due south of Bulford, the country rises so steeply that the bigger hills are usually called mountains. Waterfalls brawl in lonely glens. Rough roads climb between walls of loose stones up to bleak villages and then wind down again towards cosy market-towns in the fat valleys.

Into the tiny capital of this little Switzerland, Edward Redding and Harry Coggin trotted thankfully on the Saturday afternoon. Redding had chosen the route after learning that Coggin had never set foot on any height more considerable than Skilbury Beacon; and he had found keen pleasure in observing the impression which the wild and airy wastes made upon his humble friend. Their mid-day meal of bread and cold meat and cheese had been eaten on the heathery marge of a tumbling brook, with not a house in sight.

After handing over the horses to an admiring ostler and bespeaking rooms and a dinner, the two young men fared forth on foot to visit the ruins of a castle on a rock overhanging the swift, clean river. It turned out that the battered walls and crumbling tower had no antiquarian importance; but the spot was pleasant and breezy, so they threw themselves down on the short grass and lay gazing up into the pure blue sky.

"England is a beautiful country," said Redding.

"It is indeed," agreed Coggin. "This is what I have seen in pictures. But pictures gave me no hint of this quiet or of this air. Bulford and my own country seem a thousand miles away."

They lay on their backs for about ten minutes without ex-

changing further words. Then Redding half raised himself and said, leaning upon one elbow :

“Coggin, I am going to speak to you very seriously and I am going to make a strange proposal. Do you promise not to be hurt? You do. Very well.

“Harry Coggin, I expect to receive on Monday a telegram from Bully Tranter saying that Venn-Venning has signed a confession. You wondered why I did not join you again yesterday morning for another frost-bite in your ice-cold swimming-bath. I was n’t between the blankets. I was writing hard. Bully Tranter took with him three letters from me to persons in Boulogne and a sheet of exact directions for his own use. I firmly believe he will succeed. If he does n’t, we shall find some other means. In any event, I shall keep my promise of marching you out of Bulford with all flags flying. But now comes the rub. When you ’ve done with Bulford, done with furniture-broking, done with your old chapel, what next? There shall be plenty of money—your own money—in your pocket; but what then?”

Coggin had turned over on his side to hear better. He sat up respectfully but said nothing.

“Naturally,” Redding went on, “you will want to devote yourself entirely to music and to live by it, as I live by my brush and my pencil. But I see a difficulty. Along with the difficulty, I see a solution.”

Redding had hardly mentioned a solution before he appeared to be dissatisfied with it. Jumping to his feet he paced quickly up and down the short enclosure of the ruins. Coggin also rose up.

“Yesterday,” said Redding suddenly, “you let me skim through your compositions, both the printed albums and the manuscripts. I am not much of a musician; but of one point I am sure. In each composition I found the same fatal defect; and in each case the defect was on the first page.”

"You mean," Coggin answered mildly, "that my themes, my subjects, my melodies are not immediately striking or pleasing to the ordinary ear. I admit it. What people call tunes do not appeal to me. In nearly all my compositions the interest is supposed to deepen with every bar, and the full outlines of the melody are only gradually revealed. All popular composers can pen an attractive first page. Then they fall away into mere variations."

"I'm not clever enough to know anything about that," said Redding. "Perhaps I'd better be blunt. What is wrong on your first page is not the music, the theme, the how-do-you-call-it. Slogger, don't be hurt. What's wrong is your name—the name Henry Coggin. Mark me. I don't say it is n't every bit as good a name as Edward Redding. But it won't do. You might have a dream, as I've heard that St. Dunstan had one—a dream of the very melodies and harmonies they sing in Heaven itself—but if you woke up and jotted it down and signed it 'Coggin' nobody would buy a copy."

"It is the only name I have," replied Coggin uneasily.

"Then get another. Tintoretto, Leonardo da Vinci, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Michael Angelo, Palestrina, Pergolesi, Raphael, Rembrandt, Gainsborough, Murillo, Velasquez . . . do you think these painters and composers would appeal to us as much if they were named Blobbs and Dobbs and Gobbs and Hobbs and Nobbs? No. Coggin won't do. Surely you have had a doubt about it before now?"

"Before I published my music," Coggin answered, "I hesitated whether to use my mother's maiden name of Croxon."

"Croxon is n't bad," said Redding. "But, if you make a change at all, be bold. I should rule all English names right out. We English have the conceited idea that we are an imperial race and that we demean ourselves by practicing what we regard as the more effeminate arts. We expect France, Italy, and Germany to send us our chefs and milliners and

dancing-masters and musicians. What 's in a name? A great deal when the name rings foreign. There 's talk of knighting Julius Benedict, the Würtemberger, and Michael Costa, the Spaniard; but Balfe, a man of far more originality will probably remain a Mister. Now then, Slogger, which is it going to be—Italian, French, or German?"

"It would certainly not be French and certainly not Italian," retorted Coggin, with unusual warmth.

"Well, well, don't look fierce about it. There 's plenty of time to decide."

Coggin was glad to have the debate adjourned. While he knew that his name was ugly and grotesque, he had gradually come to take a certain pride in it. The name was boldly displayed over the door of the chapel, it was neatly written in white letters on his carts, and it was tastefully engraved on his bill-heads. None the less he saw that there was reason in his protector's proposals.

When they had left the ruins a quarter of a mile behind them Edward Redding burst out:

"Then you 're to turn German. How much German do you know, Slogger?"

"I can't speak it," replied the composer. "I read it fairly well. The night before you came I finished 'Miss Sarah Sampson.' "

"Miss who?"

" 'Miss Sarah Sampson,' You know, it was Lessing's first successful tragedy."

"The deuce it was! With a title like that I should have thought it was a screaming, naughty farce. Never mind. You are going to turn German. You must grow a beard, and wear spectacles and rumple your hair, and drink ever so much more beer. And look here, Herr Coggenheim, you must give up being so confoundedly clean. Who 's going to believe you 're from Hanover or Saxony so long as you begin the



day with a plunge into 33 Fahrenheit? Ach Himmel! Donner und blitzen! Mein Herr Gott!"

Coggin was spared further chaff: for a little girl from the inn came running towards them with a message that the trout were ready and that the leg of lamb would be overdone.

The more Edward Redding talked of his latest proposal the better he liked it. Even if he had stopped to think before talking, it would not have occurred to him that this invitation to renounce his nationality might have pained or even insulted Harry Coggin. The truth was that Edward Redding, while scolding other people for treating Coggin as an outsider, still had moments of condescension towards his humbly-born companion. It would have been unthinkable to suggest that Sir George Batwood or even Bully Tranter should cease to be an Englishman; but Henry Coggin moved on another plane. Further, Edward Redding, like many other young men of his time, lacked patriotism. He was proud of his English blood in the sense that he regarded all other races as inferior, but otherwise the sense of nationality was lacking; partly because he thought he shared the Liberal opinions of certain amiable doctrinaires and partly because frontiers and diversities of laws and governments had generally meant bother during his years of foreign travel. It would have hurt his dignity exceedingly if anybody had suggested that he or his social equals should cease to be English; but he perceived nothing intrinsically shocking in apostasy from one's race and country.

Happily for their friendship, Coggin was equally deficient in the sense of nationality. No clarion call had ever warmed him into pride of his English birthright. He had known only such faint reminders as the Queen's head on stamps; the letters "V.R." here and there; some exciting weeks during the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny; a little flag-flying and

cannon-firing on royal birthdays; certain taxes; a captured gun from Sebastopol in Guildhall Square; a tattered regimental banner in the south aisle of St. Michael's; and an occasional patriotic harangue. So Coggin listened to Mr. Redding with concern but without resentment.

On the Sunday morning, after a very early swim and a very ample meal, the travelers turned their horses' heads homewards. Their route, however, did not retrace the steps of the day before. Edward Redding had studied his map to good purpose. Keeping alongside the blithe and friendly river they cantered clear of the brooding mountains and rode down through rich pastures into a large village, just as the bells were calling the country folk to prayer.

"This way," whispered Redding, after they had left their horses at an inn close to the church door. "Do as I tell you."

He had seen a man in rusty black, with a roll of music under his arm, worming himself up a spiral staircase. They followed until, at the top of the steps, they brushed against an organ of fair size. Six or seven boys and men had preceded the organist and were lounging about.

"Sir, I am taking a great liberty," said Redding in his most winning style. "My friend here is a distinguished organist and composer. He would have preferred to kneel in this church to-day as a simple worshipper; but, if he can relieve you, he is at your service."

The jaded-looking schoolmaster jumped at the offer. He explained that the psalms were said, not chanted, and that there would be no singing save "Jackson in F," and two hymns.

Coggin wriggled into his place on the bench, and while the parishioners assembled below he took stock of the instrument. Although the hautboy was dreadful the other stops were in tune, and no mechanical defects appeared. He rounded off his prelude softly. Even Jackson in F found him quite

cool, and he did not try to get more out of that well-worn composition than there was in it. But when the service was over and the people were beginning to loiter out of the church, Harry let himself go. The windows rattled, every old slab in the worn pavements became a living stone, the rafters hummed and echoed. If Redding had not leapt to his aid, the astonished organ-blower would have failed to keep the bellows full. The congregation streamed back into the church and the clergyman stood stupefied at the vestry door.

As the organ-blower, after spitting for luck upon the five-shilling piece which Redding gave him, was busy polishing the coin on his sleeve, the schoolmaster poured out thanks and begged for the strange musician's name.

"Yes. I also would like to have your name," said a voice behind the organ. The vicar had climbed the spiral stairs.

Coggin was about to speak when Redding stepped forward. Coggin's heart stood still. Surely, in a church, Mr. Redding would not dare to introduce him by a German name?

"Pardon our making a mystery, sir, and pray do not think us disobliging," said Teddie in his magnificent Spanish hidalgo manner. "For this morning, my friend has no name; but he is none the less your respectful and most obedient servant."

The idea of a wandering musician without a name tickled Redding mightily. Over the cold beef at the inn he persistently addressed Coggin in the third person. Would the Nameless One pass the mustard? What did the Unknown think of the cheese? But at last he began calling Harry "the Herr" which he insisted on pronouncing as "the Hare"; and when they regained the chapel, happy and weary, he said:

"To-morrow will be a great day. The Hare had better snuggle into his form at once."

## CHAPTER X

**B**ULLY TRANTER'S telegram, which was delivered at half-past eight on the Monday morning, ran:

*V has willingly signed document completely exonerating C, but document also discloses circumstances extenuating hoax perpetrated by V on C. Returning Bulford Monday evening.*

"This is glorious," cried Teddie. "Anybody can see that Bully Tranter has n't worded this telegram himself. Venn-Venning drew it up—damn his polysyllables! I can see it all. Though he 's frightened to death, he 's as artful as monkeys. A hoax, by Jove! But to-night we shall know whether we can catch out Rambury or not."

"I am cleared," said Coggin.

He turned away to hide his emotion. Redding strode up to him and wrung his friend's hand. "Of course you 're cleared," he almost shouted. "Now to work, to work! There 's no time to waste. Within nine days I want to have you out of England and on your way to Deutschland. We 've got to sell this furniture-broking business, either piecemeal or as a going concern. That means inventories, catalogues, price-tickets. So to work!"

"Everything is ready," answered Coggin quietly. He produced some books and some foolscap sheets. Redding glanced at them and saw that the whole stock-in-trade had been minutely recorded. Every picture, every piece of china, every yard of carpet, every clock, every chair, every old book was set down, with its cost price and its estimated value. And underneath every object, from the pianofortes down to the kitchen



chairs, there was a tiny label numbered to correspond with an entry in the stock-book. An auctioneer could have prepared the whole collection for sale in half-an-hour.

"You are wonderful, Herr Highovermusikdirektor-Slogger-Wogger," Teddie murmured. "Here 's real German thoroughness. You put us muddling procrastinationg English to shame. So there 's nothing to be done till Bully Tranter arrives. Stay! I 'll tell you what to do. Begin sorting out the books and music and keepsakes that you 're not going to sell. Keep them down to as small a heap as you can. Pack them securely to be stored till you come back from the Vaterland. Meanwhile I 'm going to parade the town. The more I shew myself the better. Secrecy has served our turn long enough. I shall be back at six; and then I 'll go and meet Bully."

"You will need something to eat before then."

"I shall need it and I shall get it."

He took his hat and cane and stepped out into the street, honestly intending to perambulate the main thoroughfares of Bulford. But somehow his steps turned towards Hanover Grove. Surely, he argued, Mrs. Hilliard ought to be told at once of her nephew's full and swift success.

After he had broken the news Edward Redding found the lady's morning-room so pleasant that he was loth to go. When he left the house it was only to accompany Mrs. Hilliard into the cottages of certain aged widows who lionized Edward exceedingly for his father's sake; and, after a charming though rather too lady-like a luncheon, he sat all the afternoon with his queenly hostess in her rose-garden, talking much of Coggin, less of Alfred Tranter, and a little of himself.

The London train steamed into the station half-an-hour late. At first nothing was to be seen of Bully. The huge fellow, bursting with importance, wished to be taken very seriously; but, on catching sight of him, Redding tugged him out of the compartment as if he had been a mere mail-bag.

“Hand me that confession,” he commanded. “It ’s in this envelope? Right. Now run home to auntie. And don’t stir out till I send for you.”

Venn-Venning’s apologia—a very, very long screed—was too clever by half. The panic-stricken adventurer had hesitated between two lines of defense, and his fluent paragraphs redounded with inconsistencies. According to the opening pages he had intended only to play a practical joke on Coggin, and it was purely from forgetfulness that he had left England without confessing the prank and refunding the money. In support of this pretension he made a great deal of having said that the forged Constables came from “his uncle’s.” By this he maintained that he had waggishly meant a certain pawnbroker from whom he had bought the canvases for a trifle. At this point, however, the tone of the confession changed. The very handwriting became less insolent, and it could be seen that the pen had trembled in the culprit’s hand. The last page was a cry of despair, a wail for mercy; and the closing words were, “I was pushed into this by Albert Rambury.”

While a messenger was on his way to summon Bully Tranter, the two young men held a council of war. It was decided that Coggin should go into Demehaven on the morrow by the first train, to initiate negotiations for the sale of his lease and stock and good-will to a firm whose partners had long wished to establish a branch in Bulford. Meanwhile Redding was to launch a surprise attack on the enemy, which would involve some novel and sprightly tactics. He had not finished explaining his bold plan when Tranter entered the chapel.

The giant hulked in with a jaunty, friendly air. He had evidently come to regard himself as an out-and-out Cogginite. With exceeding satisfaction Edward Redding saw that the

journey to France and back had done Mr. Tranter a vast amount of good in every respect.

A hundred questions, of which at least ninety-five were put by Redding, brought out the story. It appeared that Venn-Venning had indeed worded the telegram, and that there had been no great difficulty in persuading him to write the first half of the confession.

"I sat beside him while he was scribbling it," Tranter explained. "When Venn-Venning came to the end of the third page—the bit about calling the pawnbroker his uncle—he was going to break off and simply sign it. But I read it over and told him it would n't do. He said that was all he knew about the affair, and he refused to write more."

"What happened?" asked Redding.

"I told him he was a liar," answered Tranter, with immense pride.

"Did he mind?"

"Not a bit. He laughed. Then I spoke up and told him that if he did n't make a clean breast of everything, especially about Rambury, Slogger Coggin would break every bone in his body and wring his neck. I believe he thought Slogger was in Boulogne, waiting outside. He . . ."

"To cut it short, he wrote two more pages? Quite so," said Redding. "And very useful pages they are. Mr. Tranter, you have done grandly. Don't spoil it by letting slip a single syllable about your journey to any one. Drink this glass of wine with us. Then go home and stay there till to-morrow night. There are two men in Bulford, Mr. Woodley the solicitor and Mr. Albert Rambury, whom you must not run against till I have done with them. Here you are. It is Amontillado, twice as old as yourself. The toast is 'Slogger Coggin.' *Fiat justitia*. No heel-taps. Now trot off home."

Dinner in the old vestry that evening was a short meal,

hurriedly served and inattentively consumed. Towards its close, the host began apologizing for its defects.

"We are certainly eating a bad dinner," agreed the guest. "But to-morrow we shall make up for it. Now don't oppose me. By to-night's post I write to Sir George Batwood, explaining everything and begging him to bring Lady Batwood here to-morrow night. They will come when they know Mrs. Hilliard has dined in this room. Of course I shall get Mrs. Hilliard to come to-morrow night as well. And understand that this is at my cost and expense. I shall engage a waiter from the Bulcaster Arms. A lobster mayonnaise and a cold roast capon and an exceptional dessert shall be sent in; so if you can manage one of your stunning soups and some kind of interesting out-of-the-way hot entrée, to come between the cold fish and the cold fowl, we shall dine famously. As for the wine, you shall provide it. You are leaving Bulford next week; so why should n't we bring up the best bottles?"

Although Coggin quailed, he bowed to the generalissimo's will; and while the letter to Sir George was being written he slipped out to the butcher's in quest of a prime fillet of beef for his entrée. On his return he found that Redding's flying pen had achieved three letters—one very long and two very short. The long letter was for the baronet with a postscript for Lady Batwood. The other letters were written on Coggin's business note-paper. The first ran:

MR. ALBERT RAMBURY.

Sir,

*Please come here to-morrow, Tuesday, evening at seven precisely to see Mr. Coggin and myself. No other time and place will suit us.*

*If you do not attend, we shall feel ourselves free to take a certain course immediately and without further notice.*

*Your obedient servant,*

EDWARD REDDING.



The second letter was unsigned. It ran :

MR. SAMUEL WOODLEY.

Sir,

*Please put together all such papers as I am entitled to, now that I have paid in full your bill of costs.*

*Also, please come here to-morrow, Tuesday, at seven p.m. punctually to meet my friend Mr. Edward Redding and myself. No other appointment can be offered, and it is in your own interest that you should attend.*

*Your obedient servant,*

.....

“Sign the letter to Woodley,” said Redding. “No, don’t copy it out in your own hand. I have my reasons. Merely sign. Thanks. I’ve just time to catch the last post.”

## CHAPTER XI

**O**N the following morning, before ten o'clock, Mr. Woodley literally collided with Mr. Albert Rambury at the angle of Market Street and St. Peter's Lane.

"I was on my way to see you," said Rambury. And Woodley answered:

"So was I."

Although the lawyer was the more flurried of the two, the accountant could not wholly conceal his anxiety. Turning out of the busy street into the quiet lane they compared notes. At last Rambury said:

"I am for grasping the nettle. If we don't, it will sting. This Edward Redding can cause us a great deal of annoyance. He is his father over again—always flying off with some mad idea of exposing a scandal and succoring the oppressed. You remember, Woodley, how the father got Coggin on the brain? He tilted at everything and everybody in Bulford, like a regular Don Quixote; and although he had to suffer for it smartly in the long run and give up the living, he made it very uncomfortable for reasonable people while the nonsense lasted. This son of his seems even worse; because he is just a big sky-larking boy, with no sense of responsibility. They say he makes a lot of money as an artist, and he has plenty of leisure to meddle in other people's business. I repeat that he can be exceedingly troublesome. The only way is to stand up to him boldly, at once. So I propose to go round to Coggin's chapel this minute. That will be my answer to his impudent message that I must attend at seven to-night or not at all."

"I'll come with you," cried Woodley. He had a second-rate will and a third-rate mind, and was immensely relieved at the prospect of hiding himself behind this cool and competent young Rambury.

"You forget," said the other. "You are Coggin's solicitor, not mine. If that affair is to be re-opened, you are supposed to be acting against me. Keep away. Indeed, we are most indiscreet in walking together now. You'd better go back to your office. I'll send you a confidential line before noon."

Albert Rambury stepped briskly away. His coolness had so often enabled him to out-wit better and even cleverer men that he advanced to the fray with growing confidence. He decided to make Coggin and Redding shew their hand, by the simple expedient of insisting politely on an explanation of Redding's "extraordinary letter just received." Further, he would suavely ask him what they wished him to do. He would then demand time for consideration and would out-manœuvre both the hated Coggin and the intrusive Redding.

At the chapel door Mr. Rambury experienced his first check. He found himself confronted by the neatly-written notice:

### CLOSED FOR STOCKTAKING

Pulls at the bell-rope and hammerings on the panels were of no avail. Albert Rambury was not an imaginative man, but for once he scented an omen. He was shut out. What if Coggin, the detestable upstart Coggin should triumph after all? Throughout his intrigues against the rag-and-bone man's son, Rambury had taken it for granted that his victim had no effective allies. The Reddings had been so many years out of Bulford that they had practically faded from his mind. Yet, like a thunderbolt out of the blue, this dare-devil, handsome, affable, well-to-do, leisured, damnable, young Edward had

plumped into the middle of the stage, not asking questions or suggesting discussions, but issuing commands like a god.

Regaining his office, Mr. Albert dashed down with an angry quill some contemptuous lines for Mr. Woodley. He wrote:

*The chapel is closed. I deem it best to be there at seven o'clock and end this nonsense. You had better come too. Pardon my advising, for your own sake, that you should content yourself to-day with a diminished allowance of brandy.*

A. R

As seven o'clock resounded, Mr. Rambury jerked at the chapel bell. Behind him stood Mr. Woodley, panic-stricken but sober. The door was flung open by an imposing personage, who wore the airs of an old-established family butler admitting a couple of poor relations. This was Turton, the headwaiter of the Victoria Hotel at Demehaven, whom Coggin had engaged, on Redding's revised instructions, instead of a waiter from the Bulcaster Arms.

As neither Woodley nor Rambury had seen Turton before, they were not only abashed but mystified. And their amazement grew as they followed meekly in the great man's wake. The chapel had been turned into a magnificent salon. Their feet sank deeply in fine carpets, and their nostrils were filled with the scents of lilac and roses. On the many tables stood bowls of flowers, silver candlesticks, statuettes, vases, and richly-bound volumes. But these surprises were as nothing to the shock which followed.

Walking pompously ahead, Turton paused outside the wide-open door of the old vestry, where the table was already laid for dinner. Both Rambury and Woodley enjoyed occasional access to stately houses; but nowhere had either of them seen so gorgeous a combination of plate and napery, of china and glass and silver, of fruits and flowers and candles. As in the



chapel, lilac and roses were everywhere. On a side-board stood wines of jewel-like colors in richly cut decanters, while the necks of two bottles rose over the brim of a massive Sheffield champagne-cooler.

"Mr. Rambree and Mr. Woodley," repeated Turton after learning the visitors' names. "I will tell Mr. Coggin and Mr. Redding at once. Pr'aps you will kindly step into the li-bry."

In the library were more pots of lilacs, more bowls of roses, more rich carpets, more little tables, more beeswax candles in silver sconces, more easy chairs. Woodley was about to ask what it could all mean when Coggin and Redding entered the room.

Albert Rambury rose and advanced to meet Redding, holding out his hand. Redding, however, affected not to see and merely bowed. Waving Rambury back into his chair he said:

"As Mr. Coggin and I have another appointment, you will allow me to get immediately to business. Mr. Woodley, you have acted as Mr. Coggin's legal adviser. Mr. Rambury, you and Mr. Coggin were once school-fellows."

Rambury winced; but without giving him time to interject any protest, Redding went on: "You should therefore be suitable persons to advise Mr. Coggin in a matter affecting his honor and welfare.

"Throughout many years, Mr. Coggin has been the victim of almost incredible conspiracies and intrigues. No doubt you have heard of the wrecking of his concerts—a disgrace to Bulford and an affair which fills every honest hearer with disgust. That was very serious, and I hope to bring the guilty parties to a reckoning; but it is not our main business to-night.

"You know that recently, in connection with some forged oil paintings ascribed to Constable, Mr. Coggin has suffered cruel anxiety, heavy legal expenses, grave personal discredit, and serious loss of business. Despite the cleverness of the pro-

cedure, we have discovered the instigator of this dirty job. You both know Mr. Frederick Venn-Venning?"

"Yes, yes," cried Rambury, enormously relieved. At the word "instigator" his blood had run slow; but now it flowed free again. "Venn-Venning," he added, "is a blackguard. There is no shady trick he would n't do. Mr. Coggin is not the only victim."

"No. And Venn-Venning is not the only blackguard," said Redding, swiftly and sternly. "Venn-Venning's part in this outrage was already notorious. I mention his name to-night for one reason only. In my hand I hold not only Venn-Venning's confession but also his incrimination of somebody else—of the dastardly instigator. And this is why I ask your advice. The culprit is beyond question, a cur, an unspeakable scoundrel. But unfortunately he is also an old boy of our old school—the school which all four of us have attended at one time or another.

"Three courses, and only three, seem possible. First, Mr. Coggin could proceed in the ancient fashion. He could come up with his enemy in some public place and thrash him in such circumstances of ignominy that the vile coward would never be able to lift up his head in Bulford again. I see one great disadvantage in this course. We all remember, that when we were boys, we used to speak of 'Slogger' Coggin. I fear that if once his blood were up, Mr. Coggin might not only punish but perhaps kill his man. No jury, after hearing all the facts, would have him hanged for it; but we don't want battle and murder and sudden death if we can help it.

"Second, Mr. Coggin might, first thing to-morrow morning, set the law in motion—not the civil law, for mere money damages, but the criminal law, for conspiracy and for criminal libel. With the evidence and documents which have just come into his possession, he could irretrievably ruin the vile plotter by whom he has himself been so nearly ruined. He

could disgrace him, beggar him, drive him out of Bulford, perhaps out of the country. As a good citizen, I feel this is the course Mr. Coggin ought to take. The third course . . . well, I hardly like to name it, because it savors of compounding with evil. But I will put it before you. Third, Mr. Coggin might consent neither to thrash the criminal nor to fling him into prison. He might, on condition of receiving the most ample reparation, forgive his enemy. I say, the most ample reparation: and also the most abject apology. Mr. Rambury, you are reputed a cool-headed and sapient man. If I have made myself clear, perhaps you will favor us with your valuable opinion."

Rambury's face had blanched to the whiteness of chalk. For this young man, life held only three terrors—physical pain, prison, and penury. The thought of gaol was not new to him, because he was always engaging in sharp practices where a false step might tumble him within reach of the law. But what froze him with the most sickening fear was Redding's easy-going forecast of a possible fight in which Slogger, roused to white-hot passion, would certainly mutilate and probably kill him.

"Don't answer in a hurry," said Edward Redding with a scorn which he could not conceal. "Take your time. You see, Mr. Rambury, this is extremely important. It involves somebody's liberty and perhaps his life."

Albert Rambury applied his nimble wits to find a joint in Edward Redding's armor, but in vain. He felt like a choking, drowning man clawing desperately at the polished side of an iceberg. At last, however, he rallied himself and managed to say, with something like his usual arrogance:

"As my opinion is asked, I give it. Beware lest these threats recoil on your own heads. The law is full of pitfalls and miss-fires. You are relying on what purports to be a confession by Venn-Venning. How do you know that he is

not lying to you as he lied to . . . to Mr. Coggin? Pardon my saying that the affair of the concerts is susceptible of another and more natural explanation. As for the pictures—well, Mr. Coggin ventured out of his depth and has had to pay for his experience.”

“Then your advice is—what?”

“Not to throw good money after bad.”

“Money is n’t everything,” said Redding. “I’ll put my question in another way. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that we hold overwhelming proofs of the plotter’s guilt. Always remembering that he is an old boy of Bulford Grammar School, which would you advise us to do? Horse-whip him? Lock him up? Or forgive him, on stern conditions?”

“It is not my business,” snapped Rambury. His manner was as insolent as ever. But his voice shook, and Redding knew that the battle was half won.

“Mr. Woodley, as Mr. Rambury refuses his opinion, perhaps you will give us yours,” asked Redding, turning to the solicitor.

“No. I sha’n’t! I won’t!” bawled Woodley, jerking himself out of the deep arm-chair and striding towards Redding. “We’ve had enough of this play-acting. Say straight out what you mean, like a man. You mean that Rambury is the villain of the piece and that I am his accomplice. Then say it. Say it straight out. Say it.”

“You have said it for me,” replied Edward Redding quietly, as he folded his arms across his breast and stared the solicitor full in the face.

“I demand to see what that damned Venn-Venning says about me,” Woodley shouted. He sprang to the table and pounced on Tranter’s long envelope: but he was too late by the twinkling of an eye. Redding grabbed the document and said sharply: “This paper is Mr. Coggin’s. By the way, have you



brought him the other papers he has asked for? No: don't argue. Hand them over this instant."

After delivering up the papers, Mr. Woodley spluttered out a long and excited defense. He claimed great credit for having accepted Coggin as a client. No other first-class Bulford solicitor would have acted for Coggin against Mr. Rambury. As for his handling of the case, it was an abominable lie that he had been double-faced. His, Samuel Woodley's, skill alone had settled the trouble at half the expense in which any other solicitor would have landed Coggin. As for his surrendering instead of fighting the case out, he admitted it and was proud of it. How could Coggin have gone before a judge and jury? He would have been laughed out of court.

"Take just this one point," he continued. "Coggin admits that Venn-Venning said the pictures were from his uncle's. His uncle's, Mr. Redding. Think of a witty Q.C. on the other side addressing the jury on a needy adventurer's uncle! I repeat Coggin would have been laughed out of court—covered with a ridicule even more damaging than the disgrace."

Redding let Samuel Woodley talk on for at least five minutes more without any interruption save the occasional penciling of a note on a scrap of paper before him. When the solicitor's breath failed, Rambury craned forward to speak: but his cunningly-framed words were never uttered. Redding rapped the table sharply with a ruler and said:

"You have been told already that Mr. Coggin and I have another appointment. Our time is nearly up. Mr. Rambury, when you were asked for your opinion you would not give it; and now it is no longer wanted. Mr. Woodley, you said I regarded you as Mr. Rambury's accomplice. I prefer to call you an accessory after the fact. Your speech just now was rambling and terribly long, but I thank you for it. You have flooded with light several corners of this disgusting affair which were obscure till you spoke; and you have given me the

key to more than one passage in Venn-Venning's statement. Listen."

Edward read rapidly and distinctly the paragraph in the confession about Venn-Venning's uncle; and he added a few other excerpts which shewed how deeply Coggin's solicitor had been admitted to Rambury's confidence and how thoroughly the pretended antagonists had played into one another's hands. Here a word and there a phrase, here a fact and there a fiction, chimed in fatal unison with Mr. Woodley's too fluent apologia. Putting the confession back in its envelope, Edward Redding went on harshly:

"Sir, you sold Mr. Coggin, your client. Furthermore, in defiance of all professional honor, you disclosed his private affairs in idle gossip to strangers and you even poured on him the ridicule from which you say you labored to save him. And for betraying him, for slandering him, for helping this dirty scoundrel Rambury to ruin him, for laughing at him behind his back, you have overcharged Mr. Coggin at least fifty guineas. I have perused your bill of costs. Now, heed my words. Either you will undertake, before the clock points to twenty-five minutes past seven, to make full and swift amends . . . or something will happen. Albert Rambury, stand up. Do you hear me? Stand up!"

As pale as death, Rambury rose to his feet. Once more he tried to speak; once more he was thundered down.

"Before you entered this room to-night," said Redding, "Mr. Coggin entrusted your fate to my discretion. I have spoken of three courses. A thrashing which may mean your death and his imprisonment; or your immediate arrest and almost certain ruin; or forgiveness on conditions. Albert Rambury, I ought to decide on the thrashing. Your own father worked upward from being a poor boy; yet you have despised Harry Coggin because he was humbly born. You affect to love music: yet a vile jealousy has urged you to hu-

miliate and thwart the one musician in this town whom you should have been proudest to know and to encourage. You set yourself up as a judge of pictures; and you have used your little knowledge, your dangerously little knowledge, to ruin and to try and drive from his native place a scholar and an artist whose boots you are not fit to clean. You and yours hate him because he has made a little money—not like you, by usury and by trickery, but by hard work with his own hands. Albert Rambury, have you anything to say before I pronounce sentence?"

"It 's lies, all lies, lies, lies," cried Rambury. His voice was almost a scream.

"Is it a lie that you sent Venn-Venning to this old chapel with those forged pictures? Is it a lie that you saw Venn-Venning that same evening and that you were told what had passed? Is it a lie that you sent Tranter here too? Is it a lie that you bought one of the pictures in bad faith? Is it a lie that the other plaintiff, the Londoner Brassington, was a man of straw and your nominee? Is it a lie that this poor indolent procrastinating drunkard Woodley, with his dwindling practice, his weakening wits and his foggy mind, became your tool? Is it a lie that you were concerned in the wrecking of those concerts? Think well, before you answer, Albert Rambury. If you say that one, even one, of these statements of mine is a lie—then you will have told the arch lie, the last lie, the lie we shall not endure. Think well. But do not dally. Have I told one lie, one single lie? Speak. I shall not wait. Have I lied? Yes or no?"

A silence followed; a silence intensified by the multitudinous ticking of Coggin's big and little clocks, all over the building. It was as if a hundred grievous hearts, some sharp with pain, some dull with sorrow, were beating, beating, beating. Rambury's nerves gave way. He staggered up to the table and fell forward supporting himself on the palms of his

hands. Then, with his lips not more than six or seven inches from Redding's eyes, he whimpered:

"No. It's all true. You have not lied."

"Samuel Woodley, step here and stand by Albert Rambury," commanded Redding. "I decide on the last of the three courses. You shall be forgiven, on conditions. The conditions are these:

"Provided his honor is completely and publicly vindicated; provided you both acknowledge your offense; and provided full reparation is made to him; then Mr. Coggin will not only wipe the sponge over this affair but will sell his business and leave Bulford for good. The dust of this town, where he has known nothing save humiliation and persecution, shall be shaken from his feet. Good news for you, isn't it, Albert Rambury? But there's a price to pay.

"The night before Coggin quits Bulford, we shall have a meeting in the Town Hall. At that meeting you and Mr. Woodley, with others, will make short speeches to the effect that you have watched him closely in business and that you have never known a more upright and honorable man than Henry Coggin. Your speeches must be written down and submitted to me beforehand, and must be delivered verbatim according to the approved manuscripts, with no variation whatever. Furthermore, you will both subscribe to a testimonial which will be presented to Mr. Coggin on that occasion. Mr. Woodley, you will subscribe one hundred guineas. Mr. Rambury, your contribution will be five hundred pounds. I have finished. You may go home."

Albert Rambury stumbled backward, with one arm covering his eyes as if to ward off a blow. Then he went raging mad. "Five hundred pounds!" he screamed. "It's robbery, it's . . . it's blackguardly blackmail. Woodley, Woodley! You're a witness. You heard him say it. It's blackmail. We've been threatened with assault and battery.



These two swindlers have demanded money with menaces. We 'll go straight to the police. We 'll . . ."

"I 've told you to go home," said Redding. "Go; or I 'll kick you out. When you 've gone, you may run straight down to the police, if you like; but make no mistake about the sequel. Albert Rambury, you may be able to put Henry Coggin and me into gaol for an hour; but if you do, you yourself shall lie in prison for years—that is, if Slogger does n't kill you before you go there. My offer remains open until half-past nine to-night. If you bring policemen, we shall be here; and other people will be here also. But if by half-past nine you have not accepted my offer it will be withdrawn, and our first blow will fall this very night. There can be no haggling. Five hundred pounds and one hundred guineas. Now, clear out."

Redding strode towards the library door and led the way. Outside the old vestry he paused long enough for the guilty pair to have one more view of the resplendent dining-table and the opulent side-board. As the vestry was darkened by some great apple-trees in the neighboring orchard, more candles had been lighted during the debate in the library, giving still greater magnificence to the scene.

When the chapel portals had closed on the two dismayed and bewildered wretches and they stood safely in the deserted street, Rambury's courage returned to him. "Come," he said imperiously, "let 's at once obtain a warrant for their arrest. We 've been fools. Late dinner and flowers and wine—pshaw! All vulgar, theatrical bounce. Two swindlers and black-mailers. I don't doubt that Redding has n't a shilling, except what he 's getting out of Coggin. Hurry up, Woodley. We must face it. Boldness always pays. As soon as they know there 's a warrant out, we shall have both our bold young gentlemen on their knees."

"No," said Woodley, stepping back. "I 'm done with you,

Mr. Rambury. By God's help, I'm a different man from to-night. What Redding said was true. My eyes are opened. I've been going down hill. I'm ashamed of myself in this affair of Coggin—yes, and in many other affairs too. I'm going to pay. A hundred guineas takes a lot of raising but it's got to be done."

"I sha'n't pay a penny!" cried Rambury.

"Then the bigger fool you. They're letting you off dirt cheap. Don't you see? You both claimed and obtained damages, money damages, from Coggin for a wrong to which you had yourself been a party, even if you weren't the prime mover. Now that the hunt's up, I would rather be Samuel Woodley than Albert Rambury."

"I sha'n't pay a penny!" snapped Rambury again. But, just as Woodley was opening his mouth to argue the matter further, a lordly noise cut him short.

Over the kidney-stones of the narrow street came a carriage drawn by two stamping horses. The solicitor, who had been standing with one foot on the curb and the other in the dry gutter, sprang back for safety, pulling Rambury with him into the shelter of a doorway. The carriage drew up at the chapel gates and Mr. Alfred Tranter handed out Mrs. Hilliard.

"There's the sneak that's done it," hissed Rambury between his teeth. "But . . . who's this?"

A second carriage thumped up and came to a halt. From its ample interior emerged Sir George Batwood; and Lady Batwood, looking very lovely, descended shyly after him. Having helped her ladyship to alight, the baronet, who was not happy at the thought of bringing his exquisite young spouse to dine in a second-hand furniture shop which had been a Dissenting chapel, swept the precincts with a nervous glance. His keen eye caught Woodley and Rambury. Without a moment's hesitation he strode up to them and said:

"Mr. Woodley, you have behaved shamefully to young Cog-

gin. With my own ears, I heard you defame him. What are you doing here? Why are you sneaking and spying about with this cur Rambury? Let us understand one another. If you are up to any more dirty work I shall borrow my coachman's whip and thrash you both, here and now, till there's a crowd filling the street. Answer me. What are you doing here?"

"I am here, Sir George," replied Mr. Woodley, with great humility, "to discuss a proposed testimonial to Mr. Coggin. I have decided to subscribe one hundred guineas."

"The deuce you have!" cried the baronet. "And what about Rambury?"

"He has not yet made up his mind," purred Mr. Woodley, who had suddenly become gay, now that the danger was past. "But I sha'n't be in the least surprised if he puts himself down for five hundred pounds."

## CHAPTER XII

**T**HROUGHOUT the seven days next ensuing on Albert Rambury's complete surrender, Edward Redding was the busiest man in the country. At five o'clock every morning he braved the cold river, swimming like a fish. The early plunge, followed by a plowboy's breakfast, so toughened and strengthened him that he raced with zest through a hundred labors.

There were no more dinners in the vestry. As soon as the staggering news of the proposed testimonial and of Rambury's five hundred pounds had run round the town, invitations blew towards the chapel like autumn leaves in a gale. Harry was included in all these proffers of hospitality; partly because it had become known that Mr. Redding would not dine abroad without his protégé, and mainly because, as Coggin was leaving the town, his hosts did not need to fear social complications later on. In choosing amidst the invitations, Edward Redding displayed supreme tact, nor did he fail to make a personal call in every instance where he had to say "No."

In spite of his diffidence, Coggin was not a failure in the dining-rooms of Bulford's high society. He wore his new clothes with distinction and he rapidly acquired the latest table-manners as expounded by his guardian. As a conversationalist he gave universal satisfaction through his respectful attention to the remarks made by others, the greatest bores not excepted. Furthermore, Edward Redding took care to turn the talk artfully, now and again, towards topics on which he knew that Coggin could speak freshly and well.

The testimonial made almost terrifying progress, like a



snowball rolling down-hill. While a few shrewd cynics guessed that there was something behind Albert Rambury's astounding subscription, the citizens generally found in it a spur to rivalry. By the Friday afternoon so much money had flowed in that the *Bulford Mercury* was able to say :

The principal topic of local conversation this week has been the imminent departure from Bulford of Mr. Henry Coggin, the talented young composer who is so universally respected and deservedly esteemed among us. We learn that the fund for presenting a testimonial to Mr. Coggin already amounts to over £1600. Lord Bulcaster, who shewed a lively interest in Mr. Coggin at the outset of his remarkable career, has contributed £50. It is expected that fully £2000 will be raised. The presentation will be made in the Town Hall next Wednesday evening, at half-past six. Sir George Batwood, Bart., will preside, and will be supported by His Worship the Mayor and by most of our leading citizens.

Much more than £2000 flowed in. Bulford was a town where rivalries ran strong; and by the time Edward Redding had cunningly coaxed subscriptions out of twenty carefully selected individuals the triumph of his plan was assured. People who did not care a brass button for Harry Coggin sent checks for handsome sums, so as to outdo their social rivals. Most of the money, however, was intelligently subscribed on solid grounds. The more high-minded citizens suddenly felt ashamed of their long apathy and stirred themselves up to pay tardy honor to a neglected genius. Others, who had been concerned in the affair of the concerts and in other jealous manœuvres against Coggin, hastened to subscribe all they could afford. These mean wretches had correctly interpreted Rambury's five hundred pounds and they hailed the testimonial with delight, as a kind of lightning-conductor to divert

from them the suspicions of the terrible young Mr. Redding. But by far the largest numbers of contributions, though not the largest in money, came from simple and honest folk, high and low. Edward Redding perused with a choking throat some of the letters accompanying these shillings and half-crowns. It was evident that, although Harry Coggin had flourished in business and had become the owner of a large and valuable stock, he might have been not merely comfortable but rich if he had not steadily helped the less fortunate.

One letter—a widow's letter—ran: "I was without a penny, and three weeks still to go to the end of the quarter; so I sent for young Coggin to buy my only valuables—my dear husband's writing-table and chair. Mr. C. lent me ten pounds and never took the things away, and he let me pay him back a pound a quarter, without interest."

Another letter, a blotty scrawl, enclosed ten shillings and said: "For what Mr. H. Coggin did when the brokers was in."

A third read: "Five shillings for the only broker in Bulford with a heart instead of a flint under his waistcoat; wishing it was five pounds."

A fourth: "In grateful memory of six bottles of old portwine sent annonnimus when my poor daughter was in a decline. From one who knows they was from Harry C."

There were exactly two score of such letters; and, although Edward Redding tore up many cream-laid sheets from wealthy subscribers in Victoria Park, he folded the forty grimy scrawls with exceeding reverence and tied them up as if they had been the holographs of Shakespeare Sonnets.

Meanwhile, heaven had smiled upon Coggin's other affairs. The Demehaven furniture-dealers jumped at their chance of acquiring a branch establishment in Bulford; but they did not wish to take over the antiques and "instances of vertu,"

which were out of their depth. This passing cloud, however, soon shewed a golden lining. Edward Redding caused it to be whispered about, as a valuable secret for a few privileged persons, that Coggin was not unwilling to clear out his best things on alluring terms. For three days there was a rush. Everybody was satisfied, especially Coggin; for, although he sold his plate and china and glass, his busts and statuettes and pictures, his cabinets and clocks and choice books at reduced prices, he was nevertheless paid nearly two hundred pounds more than he would have received for the same articles if they had been lumped together with his chairs and tables and other merely commercial stuff, and handed over to the Demehaven firm.

But the glittering dust raised by all these successes and excitements could not hide from sight certain new gaunt sorrows. Hour by hour the chapel grew more bare and unhomelike as the purchasers drove away, each with some fine object either resting on the carriage seat or following on a barrow. By Saturday morning every clock, every carpet, every settee, and nearly all the other furniture had gone. Worse still, the airy, tranquil dwelling-house which Harry had so laboriously constructed out of the old chapel-vestry and Sunday School was already half dismantled. In the library the shelves were bare and the floor was cumbered with packing-cases containing Coggin's personal treasures. These included about a thousand books; the old ink-stained piano; the furniture and pictures from the Redding bed-room; a huge mass of music; and some souvenirs of Mrs. Coggin.

The organ was sold at a surprisingly high price to a little Crystal Palace which some speculators were building just outside Demehaven; but as pipe after pipe disappeared Harry felt as if teeth had been pulled out of his head and blood drawn from his veins. To Edward Redding there was nothing in these partings. When the organ-builders' men first

arrived, Redding came tearing into the vestry full of the glad news; and when their work was finished, he danced a hornpipe where the keyboards and bench had stood. To Harry Coggin all this was as though, in a house of mourning, some one had cried gleefully, "Here 's the undertaker!" and finally "Hooray, out goes the coffin at last!"

This heartlessness, or rather thoughtlessness, marked Redding's behavior more strongly every day. Although he had sternly upbraided Rambury and Woodley for treating Coggin as a creature destitute of ordinary susceptibilities, he himself repeatedly failed to remember that his young friend was more highly-strung, more delicate, more sensitive than any of Bulford's softly nurtured sons—more finely tuned, indeed, than Edward Redding himself. Ten times a day the German plan was revived and developed, always with some jest of which Coggin was the butt. Redding was honestly fond of Harry Coggin, just as a thoughtless, healthy boy is honestly fond of the dog which he drags and pushes and hoaxes and caresses and stuffs and torments all day long; but it did not occur to him that even a dog may have become attached to his corner of the back-yard, if not to his very chain.

"Great news, Hans Coggenheim!" he cried, bursting into the chapel an hour after the organ had been taken away. "I 've sold Bay Rum for a hundred guineas."

Coggin turned as pale as death. He tried to speak. "A hundred guineas," said Redding again. "And you told me yourself you only gave fifty-five for him. Why, what 's the matter?"

"I cannot sell Bay Rum," said Coggin, with tremors in his voice and in his hands.

"But you must. Why, what do you expect? Have you got the idea that Germany is still a land of romance, where you go pricking o'er the lea like the Gentle Knight, on horseback, from one frowning castle to another? If so, put it out of



your head, mein wohlgeboren Herr Coggenheimer. Your new country is blest with almost as many railways as your old one, and with far more steamboats. No, no. Bay Rum must be sold. You 'll be in Germany at least a year, and you can't have the poor beast eating his head off and his heart out as long as that. Besides, I 've sold him to a kind master, the Honorable and Reverend Cayley Mallington, the new curate at St. Michael's. Here is his check. By the way, they paid you cash down for the organ? Oh, and the curate does n't want Bay Rum till Wednesday."

Harry moved away. For once he was on the point of losing his self-control and of tearing himself loose from this benevolent tyrant. He mastered himself, however, and it was with calm features that he turned round again and said quietly:

"I shall feel it, parting with Bay Rum. He is not an ordinary horse—not to me. But I know you are doing what you believe is for the best, so I must get over it. But perhaps, Mr. Edward—perhaps this is the moment for asking one favor. To-morrow is Sunday. You said that Mrs. Hilliard expects us for the whole day, now that this home is broken up. Will she be offended if I stay away? Will she mind if you go alone? You see, I want just one day for . . . for some private affairs."

"Certainly not! I refuse!" cried Redding. "I can guess what you 'll be up to. You mean to go round your pensioners, dropping five pounds here and a guinea there. No, no. I 've thought about this already. On our last morning in Bulford, we will run round and do something for the really deserving. I 'll add a bit myself. We 'll give 'em money; but we won't give 'em any address or they 'll sponge on you till you die. Remember, Herr Orgelspielmann, that there won't be any more money for years after this. It's been coming in fast these last few days; but next week it will begin leaking out

again. We may be in the eighteen-seventies before you are solidly established as a Herr Professor with an income enough to pay your expenses. So there 's no leave of absence to-morrow, mein arme knabe."

"You and Mrs. Hilliard must indeed excuse me," said Coggin respectfully but very firmly. "You would not have me leave Bulford forever without visiting the grave of my parents."

Edward Redding's bright countenance suddenly clouded over. Stung by remorse, he seized his friend's hand and said warmly: "Forgive me, I ought to have remembered. To-morrow I will go with you."

"No," said Coggin, more firmly than before. "You did not know my parents. You never saw my mother. I must go alone."

It was just after breakfast, the next morning, that Harry said farewell to his dead. Their dust rested under a white cross in the New Cemetery; for, as William Coggin had died a Dissenter, sepulture in the churchyard was denied him, and his wife's remains lay with his, at her own request.

When St. Michael's and St. Peter's bells began to chime, the lonely mourner rose from his knees and left the graveside. It was a glorious day—just like that Sunday, twelve years before, when the Rector had departed from Bulford forever. As Harry reëntered the town, the bells were still dinning their godly summons; but he disobeyed them. Instead of passing through the graceful doorway of St. Peter's or the massive porch of St. Michael's, he made his way, for the first time in five years, to the Baptist Chapel.

The service was commencing as he walked into the building; for he had timed his arrival so as to avoid greetings and conversations. None the less, the congregation fell into a flutter before he could slip into the back seat of his choice. Mr.

Backhouse, the richest and most powerful of Bulford's Baptists, fussed out into the gangway and pushed the distinguished visitor into his upholstered and cushioned pew, while Mrs. Hoy, the wealthy widow of a grocer, turned round from her place in front of him and handed him a morocco-bound hymn-book open at the right place. Meanwhile Mr. Clupp, the pastor, had caught sight of Coggin from the pulpit.

Mr. Clupp, although a direct and fearless preacher when dealing with the errors and faults of persons who had never heard of himself or his chapel, had long been circumlocutory and timid when it came to admonishing the men and women who frequented his ministrations. With the passing of years he had become more and more afraid of giving offense; with the result that his sermons were increasingly abstract. He was therefore reduced to sending his flock various gentle hints *viâ* Heaven. That is to say, he would introduce his praise and blame, his hope and fear, into the long extemporaneous prayer which always followed the opening hymn. It was much easier to say something personal when your own and every other eye was shut.

After praying at large for familiar blessings in familiar phrases, Mr. Clupp became less glib. Framing the sentences painfully, he said: "Furthermore, we thank Thee, O Lord, for the favor Thou hast shewn to one here present whose youthful mind and character were first formed in this Thy temple, under the ministry of Thy most unprofitable servant. Grant unto him, we beseech Thee, a spirit of gratitude and of humility. Prosper him in all his goings and all his doings. And may he, and all others whom Thou hast blessed in basket and in store, remember that they are but stewards of Thy bounty."

Certain of the elect punctuated Pastor Clupp's petition with so fervent an Amen that Harry involuntarily thrust two fingers into his breast-pocket to make sure that a certain en-

velope still crackled safely there. More hymn-singing followed and some Bible-reading; and then Mr. Clupp made some announcements. As usual, the chapel was in the throes of a financial crisis. The debt on current expenses amounted to forty-eight pounds, nine shillings and fivepence—"a considerable sum, a very serious sum" as the pastor called it. "But perhaps not beyond the power of some generous friend to wipe out with one stroke of the pen."

Harry Coggin's attempts to follow the sermon failed utterly. Mr. Clupp had not enlarged or varied his vocabulary with the effluxion of years, and his every paragraph contained some mannerism which drove the young hearer back to old happenings and old sufferings. Nor was Harry the only restless listener. The stuffiness and glare made sermon-hearing a tough job. The preacher, however, clacked on without wilting.

When the end came, everybody stood up to sing the last hymn. Amidst the general stirring and stretching, Harry said in low tones to Mr. Backhouse: "I must slip away. Will you please hand this letter to the minister? I shall call on everybody I know, to say good-by."

Observed by hardly a dozen pairs of eyes, he stole out of the chapel. In the silent street outside, he ran against Mrs. Fairlop, a garrulous hypochondriac whose affections were divided between rheumatism and bronchitis. Harry was listening to certain pathological details when a melodious shout burst out of the chapel like waters bursting a dam. It was the metrical doxology, "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow." Harry guessed what had befallen. Mr. Clupp had overlooked a postscript requesting him not to make the benefaction known until the following Sunday and had proclaimed the glad tidings—fifty pounds for the chapel funds and ten pounds for a special Sunday School treat.

Cutting Mrs. Fairlop short, Harry took to his heels, like a man caught red-handed in a crime. Remembering that wor-



shippers would soon be pouring out of the churches and chapels, he chose a roundabout course and did not arrive at his goal, which was Yellowhammer Lane, until noon had struck.

During thirteen years, Yellowhammer Lane had been Harry Coggin's Holy of Holies. Its high hedge-rows were his cloister. There, in all weathers, he had walked backwards and forwards on at least six hundred Sunday afternoons; and even on weekdays, when any doubt or anxiety pressed, it was to Yellowhammer Lane that the lonely youth's steps turned, almost without his volition.

On this May Sunday, the whitethorn and the honeysuckle, and the wild roses had come to their sweetest scent and fairest bloom. From an inner pocket Harry took a thin old note-book—his diary, begun thirteen years before. He knew its contents by heart; yet he loved to read the script aloud even as a holy man loves to behold on the pages of his breviary the prayers and antiphons which he could recite from memory without a slip.

*Our Lord and Savior means us to do something great in the world. Not in Bulford. I say, in the world. Teddie, shake hands with Harry Coggin.*

Harry recited these words from the diary not once but twenty times, until they became a kind of chant. Nearly thirteen years had passed since the Rector pacing along this very lane in his fever and delirium, first pronounced the prophecy; yet the sights and sounds of that long-past September afternoon were more vivid in Harry's eyes and ears than any sight and sound of yesterday. The whitethorn, the honeysuckle, the wild roses seemed unreal, like paper flowers on Christmas trees; and underneath Spring's wantonness he felt sure of Autumn's majesty. Surely this perfumed finery

of white and pink was only a light veil over the glorious robe of yellowing foliage and the bright necklaces of scarlet berries which Nature had worn on the day of days.

The chanting weakened down to a whisper. When it had ceased, Harry came to a halt beside a gate—the Rector's gate—and mused deeply, for a long time. Then, resuming his march he began thinking aloud. It was not the first time that the briars and the thornbushes of Yellowhammer Lane had seen him thus pacing to and fro and had heard his odd monologues. From the night of his mother's death to the morning of Edward Redding's unexpected return, this high-strung lad had not found one human ear which would have listened to his cares and sorrows with sympathy and with understanding. Even his piano and his organ could not have saved him from despair and defeat if there had been no Yellowhammer Lane with its memories, its obligations and its sense of a Guardian Presence. If prying eavesdroppers had spied on him through the hedges they would have said that here was either a madman or a conceited prig practising eloquence upon an imaginary audience. But if they could have caught his words they would have slunk away baffled and terrified. For Harry Coggin's soliloquy was not all a communing with his own self. Half of it was addressed to some person unseen on whom the young man pressed questions, pleadings, chidings. And from time to time the stream of words would seem to fail for a few moments, only to flash forth again like a fountain in quick, strong bursts of prayer to God.

"It is the last time, the last time," he began. "Teddie says it must be so. On Wednesday night I leave Bulford, never to set eyes on it again.

"It has not been God's will and good pleasure that I should be like other people in this town. Yet He has given me much happiness. My music. What does it matter that they won't hear it? My mother and I were happy. I succeeded with

my business. Who would have believed that I should ever sell it for more than a thousand pounds? I have had my books, my good food and wine, my horse . . .”

But the remembrance of his horse smashed and swamped Harry's submissiveness and thankfulness; even as a spate of hot mud from an awakening volcano uproots and drowns the smiling vineyards. For nearly a fortnight he had lain like cold clay in the potter's hands; but he suddenly became a flaming coal. Anger and despair wrung from him a moan of pain.

“My horse, my good horse!” he cried. “It was a shame for Teddie to do that. What right had he to sell my horse, the only friend I had? How can I look Bay Rum in the eyes when I say good-by? What do I care about his hundred guineas? Money, money . . . for a week it's been nothing but money. I hate the name and sight of money. I don't want their testimonial. I won't take it. Let them put their guineas back in their pockets. Yes! I know what I'll do. I'll buy Bay Rum back to-morrow. And I'll buy back my business. I am a man, not a child.”

He picked up a clod of earth and hurled it savagely along the lane, like a gage flung in the face of his officious friend. The missile smashed through the stems and twigs of a giant hawthorn, bringing down the sweet petals in a little snow-storm. Harry recoiled in sudden awe. When had he last watched white blossoms fluttering earthward? He knew full well. It was on that other Sunday in May, when the Rector passed for the last time out of Bulford church-yard, blessing the people with the sign of the Cross while millions of white and red and golden petals of lilac, of hawthorn and of laburnum descended upon the kneeling outcasts like a wondrous manna from heaven. This memory was so sharp that Harry was, for a few moments, stupefied. He clutched the gate. If,

at that moment, he had heard the Rector's very voice speaking in his ear as of old he would not have been surprised.

The thin diary pricked and burned in his hand; and although he did not open it and look at it, one sentence of the Rector's stood out before his eyes plainer than the five-barred gate, plainer than the wide-eyed flowers. He seemed, in one and the same moment, to be both reading and hearing these words:

"Be brave . . . Perhaps God did not bring us together to make us happy but to make us better, to make us do His will, to make us give happiness to others still unborn. Let us go."

So overpowering was Harry's sense of his protector's nearness that he cried out:

"I will, I will! With God's help, I will be brave. Only . . . nobody save myself knows how hard it is. Teddie does not know. To him all this seems, most of the time, a glorious joke or an exciting adventure. But to me . . . to me it means leaving forever nearly everything I've ever known. I know I've been selfish; and I know my affairs had fallen into ruins just before Teddie came to set them right. Yet . . . I've tried, truly I've tried. There are poor people in Bulford who look to me for help; and now Teddie says I must go away and leave not a trace behind. Yes, I've tried not to waste my life. When I have bought truly beautiful things I have only sold them again to people who will love them and guard them and pass them on safe and sound. When I have found among my purchases any evil book or engraving, I have burnt it there and then although sometimes I've needed the money it could have brought me. I have lived, by God's help, a clean life. As for music, I've never sweetened it to make it sell. It's true that my life in Bulford has been hard and lonely, and that nearly everybody has fought me or snubbed me or cheated me. But Bulford's the only home I've ever



known. Teddie says I must shake its dust off my feet and never set eyes on it again. More than that: he says I am to give up my very name. I am not to be Harry Coggin any more. I am to be a Monsieur, or a Signor or a Herr, hundreds of miles away. And Teddie has sold my horse, my good horse. I bought Bay Rum the day after poor old Gulp died. Every morning, when we meet, he pushes his muzzle inside my coat and stands stock still, as if he's counting my heart's beats. And Teddie sold him on Friday. Oh, my dear Lord and Savior, help me through these next days. Help me to believe every moment that although Teddie chatters and laughs, that although he wounds me ten times a day, he is nevertheless Thy messenger."

Heaven made no tarrying. But if the answer to Harry Coggin's prayer was swift it was also prosaic. A pack of Bulford's roughest youths came slouching into sight. Their idea of a sylvan ramble was to slash off the head of every up-standing wayside flower, to poke their canes at anything resembling a bird's nest, and to scare away the Sabbath peace with raucous fragments of beery songs. Before they could catch sight of him, Harry climbed lightly over the gate and hid himself on the other side of the dense hedge-row. In the company of a friendly cart-horse, whose eyes reminded him of Gulp's, he ate the scanty meal which he had brought with him. It had long been one of his queer fancies to behave hermit-wise in Yellowhammer Lane; and not one of the many little packages of food which he had opened there had ever contained anything better than two slices of unbuttered bread with a few lettuce-leaves or a handful of water-cress or some radishes or a slice or two of boiled beetroot. As he stood munching this mean fare, the bells of St. Michael's sounded across the fields; and all doubt fled from his soul. God's an-

swer was that he must depart in peace and in faith, following Teddy Redding's light steps into the unknown.

With his usual punctiliousness Harry carried out exactly the remainder of his careful program for the day. First, he returned with great circumspection to Bulford, at the hour when he knew the citizens would be indoors dozing after their sirloins of beef and legs of mutton; and, stealing into St. Michael's church by the little choir-door, he gazed for the last time at Mr. Daplyn's organ, at Mr. Redding's pulpit, and at the tiny brass disc lettered "O. R." on the Denniker Chantry. Second, he quitted the church-yard by the lych-gate, exactly as he had quitted it twelve years before; and thence, street by street, lane by lane, field by field, he trod once more the twisting path along which he and George Placker and the Rector had walked after the miracle of the whirling petals. Where, he wondered, was George Placker now? Third, he came back from the foot of Skilbury Hill to the patch of glistening white pebbles under the old bridge over the Skilbourne where the Rector had bent down for water wherewith to baptize him.

Little was changed. There were the same stretches of light and of shade along the highways, the same stiles to be climbed, the same sweet splendors of flower and blossom. Harry had dreamed this pilgrimage. But he did not find it a *Via Dolorosa*, after all. He compassed it without morbidness, without mooning, almost without emotion. Heaven had smiled upon his faith and obedience. Peace overbrimmed that deep cup which was his soul. Not a negative peace, a mere deliverance from doubt and grief, but a positive peace, like a full draught of noble wine; a peace which passed his understanding.

## CHAPTER XIII

**T**HERE are not many persons now living who remember the Assembly-room of Bulford Town Hall as it appeared in the year 1864. Prior to its reconstruction in 1866 the big room was noble in itself but mean and inconvenient in its approaches. The audience entered through a low and dingy vestibule formed by screening the space under the gallery. This vestibule had an unpleasant, lop-sided look, owing to the protrusion of a horrible, stuffy little "office," built of painted match-board and ground glass, which served as a green-room when the hall was let for a public entertainment.

Through the green-room door, which he had propped open so as to diminish the vile smell of old gas-fumes, Edward Redding could see the citizens, first dribbling and then streaming into the Assembly-room for Coggin's triumph. With increasing satisfaction he noted the arrival of many notables whose support had been uncertain up to this last moment. Bumpings and rumblings just over his head proved that the Pig Laners had turned up in force, and that their hob-nailed boots were moving heavily on the floor of the gallery. The crisp chattering and bright laughter, varied by occasional light volleys of applause which reached his ears, whenever the folding doors swung open, told him that everybody was in high spirits.

Sir George and Lady Batwood appeared in the green-room doorway with five minutes to spare. Close on their heels came the Mayor, then two or three aldermen and some other demi-gods. Woodley, who was to be one of the speakers,

joined them with diffidence. Albert Rambury, the largest subscriber to the testimonial, arrived last and made a fuss over the great personages.

Suddenly the ceiling of the vestibule quivered under a succession of enormous blows. The Pig Laners were rhythmically pounding the gallery floor with their iron heels, this being their method of gently hinting that the proceedings ought to begin. A procession was formed and the doors into the hall were flung wide to welcome it. As the Batwoods and His Worship the Mayor were highly popular, their entrance evoked a rousing cheer. Edward Redding's heart thrilled proudly. This was to be Coggin's triumph indeed.

Redding walked last. As the door swung back behind him a still lustier cheer rang out. He was startled. It had never entered his mind that the populace at large would be interested in him as Coggin's champion and deliverer. Despite his fearless and masterful ways, this young man was at heart modest and self-effacing. In surprise and consternation he shrank back from his admirers; and at that moment he missed Rambury from the procession.

Hardly knowing why he did so, Edward jerked open the swing door just as Rambury was grasping the handle on the other side. Redding's was the stronger wrist, and a second later the two were face to face.

"I 'm here," snapped Rambury. "I 'm coming."

All his family were known for their cold thoroughness of facial control; but at this moment Rambury could not quite conceal his hatred and his exultation. He pushed past Redding, who might have simply walked with him up the central gangway if his sharp eye had not noticed a stealthy movement by which the other man tried to hasten the closing of the door. Edward acted instantly. Planting himself full against Rambury's narrow chest he pushed him roughly back till the door gave way and they were both in the vestibule.



Half-a-dozen men who were lurking in the shadow made a scuttling noise, like rats, and broke apart. Although the light was bad, Edward perceived at once that they were not men of Bulford. He sniffed a metropolitan rather than a provincial air about them.

“Who are these gentlemen?” demanded Redding. “Are they friends of yours? Why do they not take their seats inside, like other people?”

“I suppose they can please themselves,” retorted Rambury. Something had given him overweening courage. There was a sneer in his tone, a triumphant glitter in his eye.

For four or five seconds, Edward Redding stood crushed. Again and again during these headlong days, Coggin had suggested that the enemy might make a desperate sortie, of devilish cleverness and impudence, at the last moment; but Redding, flushed with his Napoleonic sequence of easy victories, had scouted the thought. At the back of his over-busy brain had lurked the fear that if Venn-Venning could be terrorized once he could be terrorized twice, that if one party could send an emissary to Boulogne so could the other, and that Coggin and he might easily find themselves in the lock-up on a well-supported charge of blackmail; but Edward had not allowed these possibilities to come to the front of his mind. Suddenly, however, he beheld them, grinning at him like demons.

If he had quailed for six seconds instead of four or five, Edward Redding would have been lost. In the nick of time he recaptured his wits and his will. He saw Albert Rambury turn to the strangers and make a sign; but before they could act upon it, Coggin’s champion struck like a flash of lightning. Butting like a ram at his adversary he simply shot him through the door into the hall, as a croquet-player smites a ball through a hoop. Then, dashing after him, he gripped Rambury’s arm and dragged him up the fairway. A roar of delight broke

from the people. Fond anecdotes concerning Edward's exuberance had been circulating all day in Bulford; and, excepting a few very staid people, everybody was delighted at what they took to be a charming prank. That the miserly Rambury had subscribed five hundred pounds was astounding; and here, so they thought, was this amazing young Redding deliberately crumpling up the Rambury starchiness as an example to all Bulford of heartiness and good fellowship.

At the foot of the platform stairs Edward halted; but he did not cease to grip his man's thin arm. The applause became thunderous; for, of these two young gentlemen, was not one the promoter of the testimonial and the other the principal contributor? So completely had Redding regained ascendancy that he was able to smile radiantly, as if he and Rambury were the greatest friends, while, under cover of the noise he said:

"This is your last chance. As soon as we have mounted the platform you will scribble a note to those hired blackguards, telling them to leave this Town Hall instantly. You will shew the note to me—and send it through me. When you rise to speak you will say what has been agreed without omitting or adding or varying one syllable. Fail in one jot or tittle of all this . . . and you will have yourself to blame for what happens."

"I am my own master," Rambury answered.

"Make no mistake," said Redding. "Here is your master, just coming into sight."

Rambury glanced up and saw Coggin advancing shyly from a narrow doorway at the rear of the platform. The hero of the hour, in a new jacket-suit, made a strong contrast with the chairman and his supporters, who were all wearing frock-coats and light waistcoats; but his clothes were well cut and his pale face was certainly not the most plebeian in the hall. A tremendous uproar broke out on his appearance; indeed it

was a marvel that the gallery did not collapse bodily under the stamping of big feet and the rapping of thick sticks. The cheering was enormous. The general high spirits and the sudden popularity of Coggin accounted for most of the noise; but it was swelled by the acclamations of a few persons who had been intensely jealous of Coggin and of his successes in business. In the shouts of these individuals there was a note of "Good riddance"; but nobody knew it, not even themselves. To the best of its belief, Bulford was paying with whole heart and loud voice all its long arrears of homage to the departing genius Harry Coggin.

Meanwhile Edward Redding had thrust a pencil and a notebook into Albert Rambury's hand. "Be quick," he said. "Write these words: '*Please quit the building at once. I have changed my mind.*' Quick. I won't wait!"

If Rambury had been standing in his own office or in any other ordinary environment he would have measured his will-power and his brains against Redding's. But his cold and crafty spirit was fighting for breath in this ardent and generous atmosphere; and, with the ovation to Coggin still shaking the old rafters of the hall, he broke and surrendered. In his unmistakable hand-writing he wrote the prescribed words and tailed them off with his arrogant signature.

Almost unnoticed, Redding sped back to the vestibule. The group of black-coated strangers had knit together again, buzzing and jerking, like horrid carrion flies cluthering on something foul. They fell apart once more as Redding burst among them.

"Who is in charge of this tomfoolery?" he demanded. "Who is the foreman, ganger, robber-chief, head bottle-washer, or whatever you call him? Hi, you there, with the bum-bailiff's nose . . . are you the manager? You are. Then read this . . . And if you 're not outside in one minute . . ."

The strangers, who looked like a scratch crew of solicitors'

clerks, men-in-possession and undertakers' assistants, were evidently overjoyed. They had been led to expect some easy job, and the enthusiasm inside the hall had already terrified them. Suddenly, however, gloom fell damply on them.

"What about our money?" they asked, with one voice.

"Go to Mr. Rambury's office in the morning," Redding answered. "He is a rich man. For instance, he's giving five hundred pounds to my friend Mr. Coggin in whose honor this meeting is being held. But time's up. Here's half-a-crown for beer. Out!"

They obeyed, gurgling with joy. Redding watched through a window until the last of them had been swallowed up in "The George and Dragon" opposite the Town Hall: then he hurried back to his great duty. Sir George Batwood had just finished a brief opening speech, and Edward took advantage of the applause to slip quietly into his own seat on the platform.

The next item of business was a statement by the Treasurer, a young architect named Brand, who had worked like a horse under Redding's direction. As Mr. Brand had a cheerful voice and a clear, rapid delivery, his fusillade of names and figures rattled pleasantly on the thousand ears of the audience. Instead of arranging the subscribers' names according to the amount of their donations, he read out an alphabetical list. Thus it came about that his first announcement was:

"Miss Tabitha Angell, one shilling."

The already remarkable friendliness and good temper of the meeting rose instantly to blood-heat. Bulford's oldest inhabitants could not recall a time when Miss "Tabby" Angell was not to be seen in the streets of their town bestowing peppermint bulls'-eyes on school children or hunting up homes for new-born kittens under sentence of death. Even the pompous Alderman Thatcher, who counted on filling the mayoral chair before the year was out, remembered certain bulls'-eyes with which Miss Tabby had consoled him after a thrashing at



school, and his long chin relaxed. For a moment, he and many others could have sworn that the hall reeked of peppermint.

Mr. Brand held on his course. Every name, every guinea, every half-crown evoked some kind of applause. Most of it was no more than a polite murmur from a few friends of the subscriber; and through these mere ripples Mr. Brand tore briskly along, like a bark under full sail cutting crisply through a summer sea. Now and again, however, some popular item, such as Lord Bulcaster's fifty guineas, was the signal for a tidal wave of delight; and then he was forced to put his whole strength to the helm and to smash through, head on, his big voice still ringing through the storm.

"Mr. Ephraim Rabbage, sixpence," sang Mr. Brand; and straightway the young and giddy among his listeners went wild with delight. "Grubby Gaffer Rabbage," as he was profanely called in this nick-name loving town, had never before been known to give away a penny. It sharpened the zest of the moment when the audience caught sight of Mr. Rabbage in person. He had come early and secured a front seat so as to make sure that his munificence had not miscarried through anybody's carelessness or dishonesty. So turbulent was the applause that even Mr. Brand's voice was drowned as he cried out:

"Mr. Albert Rambury, five hundred pounds."

The more serious citizens snapped "Order, order," and Sir George Batwood rapped the table with an ivory hammer. Then, through a full dull half-minute, Mr. Rambury received his meed of respectful, unexcited praise. Edward Redding scrutinized the faces before him and he saw that, while many hands were being decorously smacked together, a few lips were curling ironically, a few eyebrows were arching, a few elbows were discreetly nudging a few ribs. He turned to look at Rambury, and knew in a moment that all danger of a

counter-stroke was past. The donor of the five hundred pounds had decided that, as his money was gone beyond recall, he would at least have credit in Bulford for princely generosity. Smiling affably, he acknowledged the plaudits with an occasional slight deflection of the head, as if to say: "It has been the greatest happiness of my life to give five hundred pounds to so admirable a young man."

"I call on an old school-fellow of mine, the son of our former Rector, to speak," said Sir George, as Mr. Brand sat down. "But before he rises, let me beg that he and the other speakers may be heard without excessive applause. Mr. Coggin is leaving Bulford to-night and our time is short. Mr. Edward Redding."

Redding got up nervously. He was without experience of public speaking, and the intent silence scared him. Fortunately, however, he had committed to memory his opening sentences, and the first of them fitted perfectly into what the chairman had just said. He began:

"Sir George, I am proud to have been, for two years, your school-fellow. And I am proud to have been the school-fellow, though it was only for two weeks, of Mr. Henry Coggin. I learned during those two short weeks to wonder at his extraordinary ability and industry, at his modesty, at his grit and pluck.

"Returning to this fine old town after twelve years of absence, I found Mr. Coggin more than fulfilling my father's prophecies concerning him. I see many old boys of Bulford School here this evening. Have we all kept up our Latin? I'm afraid not. Yet Mr. Coggin has kept up his, in spite of having to work early and late at a successful and growing and difficult business. More than that; he has become proficient in French and German and Italian, and is also a fine performer on the organ and on the pianoforte as well as a serious composer of highly original music.

"It happened that, at the moment of my arrival, Mr. Coggin was enduring grievous annoyance and anxiety, through a business occurrence. Pardon my saying that even in Bulford everybody is not a model of charity, and it was therefore not surprising that a few idle or malicious people began to speak evil of Mr. Coggin. I will call a spade a spade. It was said that my friend had been less than honorable when selling certain oil-paintings. His vindication has been triumphant and complete. And here is the proof of what I say. The one man in all Bulford who knew most about those oil-paintings—the man who was for a time most violently antagonistic to Mr. Coggin—that man is now so convinced of Mr. Coggin's perfect integrity that he has come here to-night to speak to you. Meanwhile he has subscribed no less than five hundred pounds. I refer of course to Mr. Albert Rambury."

When some punctilious cheering had ceased, Redding went on:

"Happily, good has come out of evil. His anxieties and difficulties have taught Mr. Coggin that he cannot pursue several careers at one and the same time, and that he must make a choice. He has endeavored to be a go-ahead man of business, an organist, a composer, a classical scholar, a collector of antiques, and a modern linguist all at once. The man who tries to do everything ends by doing nothing. Mr. Coggin has decided, as his friends knew he would, in favor of music. And of course this means his leaving the town. There is no disrespect to Bulford in my remarking that although you have many excellent musicians in your midst, there are other and bigger worlds for a young composer to conquer. Mr. Coggin leaves Bulford to-night.

"Sir George, you remember that we used to call Mr. Coggin 'Slogger' Coggin. In spite of that ferocious name, he is very shy; and therefore he has begged me to say one or two things on his behalf. First, it goes without saying that

he thanks you all from a full heart for your unexpected and magnificent liberality, and for your great kindness in crowding here on a warm June evening to give him such a splendid farewell and send-off.

“Mr. Coggin, however, will not be shaken from the conviction that your generosity is widely out of proportion to his deserts; and he declines positively to carry away from Bulford this noble sum which you have subscribed. I am told that, except for the new Infirmary, no such subscription has ever been raised in Bulford before. My friend is persuaded that Mr. Rambury’s large gift has put the whole affair on too large a scale, and he refuses to take advantage of such a state of things. Accordingly, he instructs me in the most peremptory way to announce that he will leave one thousand pounds behind him.”

Fully a hundred voices cried “No, no”; but they were soon borne down by the hip-hoorays of the majority, and by the Pig Laners’ clamor up on high. Within thirty seconds the whole audience seemed to be standing on the benches, cheering itself hoarse. Sir George secured silence at last, and Redding added:

“‘Slogger’ Coggin—I’m tired of calling him Mister and I know he won’t mind—gives one hundred pounds to Bulford Grammar School for the legal expenses of making the Robson Scholarship open to every boy in the town. He bids me say that although he was Robson Scholar for a fortnight only, he will never cease to think of the school. I understand that the Samuel Robson money has been accumulating for twelve years and that no candidate has come forward in that time. With good-will all round the Scholarship should soon be freed.

“Further, he gives one hundred pounds to the school to endow an annual prize for Musical History and Theory. In honor of Mr. Daplyn, so long St. Michael’s organist, to whom Mr. Coggin owes most of his education in music, he wishes



this little foundation to be called the Daplyn Prize. Further, he has most respectfully begged the headmaster to give the boys an extra half-holiday on the first convenient day, and this request has been granted.

“Next, our friend gives two hundred and fifty pounds for the erection of a drinking-fountain at the point where Straight-mile Road joins East Street. In my school-days we knew it as Dusty Corner, but I ’m told you now call it Cobden Crescent. Mr. Coggin has often pitied the poor brutes who enter Bulford that way. I understand from His Worship the Mayor that this gift will be accepted. There is to be no inscription beyond the initials ‘H. C.,’ and no ornament except a frieze of horses and sheep and dogs and cattle drinking from a running brook. As our chairman, Sir George Batwood, will give the stone from his famous quarry at Marley, and as our treasurer, Mr. Brand, will design and supervise the work without fee or reward, Bulford ought to have a fountain to be proud of.

“As a poor boy, Slogger Coggin would have found good books out of his reach if his father had not been in a business which brought him second-hand volumes now and then. Perhaps there are clever boys and youths in Bulford to-day who would study if they could. Therefore Mr. Coggin offers to the town a selection of books, some shelves, desks and stools, and a sum of five hundred pounds. He earnestly hopes that somebody with a cheerful and airy room to spare will lend it for the purpose of a small library, and that the shelves will soon overflow with good books. Further, although he fears some good people may look on him as a revolutionary, he would hail with keen delight the news that on one or two days a week the library should be reserved for the gentler sex, with a rota of Bulford’s educated ladies taking turns as librarians.

“I spoke of a thousand pounds, and we have disposed of nine hundred. Slogger Coggin wishes the remaining cash to be

spent in arranging a midsummer riverside picnic for the children of the town. He would be supremely happy if he could hope that on this occasion the boys and girls of all classes and of all religious denominations would meet at the picnic, as was the custom hundreds of years ago in Bulford on St. John's Day. But his gift to the children is made without conditions. That is all I have to say on Mr. Coggin's behalf. Speaking for myself, I thank you with my whole heart."

Sir George Batwood cut short the cheering and stamping by calling out in a loud voice: "Silence, please! I have asked Mr. Coggin to oblige us with a short performance on the organ. It seems that when he last proposed to play his compositions in public he was not able to do so. Mr. Coggin."

Built across the back of the platform was a small but well-balanced organ which was used every Christmas for Bulford's regulation performance of "The Messiah," and for occasional oratorios and sacred concerts at other times. Coggin had mounted the bench while Sir George was speaking, and he immediately began his Short Overture in E Minor. Up to the coda this work conformed to the Lullian model. The performer gave out the large and mysterious Adagio in so massive a style that the hearer felt as if he were gazing rather than listening—gazing from a slowly moving chariot at wall after wall, tower after tower, of a granite castle rooted in an everlasting hill. The Adagio came to a sturdy end; not tapering away like a graceful spire but bulking solidly like a donjon-keep. Coggin attacked the Allegro. In a moment the listener was transported from the giant's castle into the midst of an enchanted wood. The thousands of staccato demisemiquavers seemed to sting the cheek deliciously, like an April shower. It was as if the elves of the greenwood were pelting the green buds and the curly leaves and the shy flowers with pellets of pure silver. Barely a dozen people in the audience knew that this dappled, pattering, flickering music was a

fugue; for Coggin had learned from his beloved Handel how to write fugues as limpid and sparkling as country dances. At last the April shower ceased; and the overture closed with a coda of noble chords, like big milk-white April clouds sailing gloriously in skies of purest blue.

The applause which followed was loud and long and hearty; yet it sounded ragged and weak after the huge trumpetings of the organ. Wasting no time Sir George called out: "Mr. Albert Rambury."

When the largest subscriber rose to his feet the hand-clapping had thinned down to a merely polite greeting; because Rambury was known to be a long and dry speaker. The audience felt that after the treasurer's engrossing list, after young Mr. Redding's exciting announcements, and after Coggin's rousing overture, the coming on of Mr. Rambury was like a compulsory ration of gruel or ship's-biscuit after roast turkey and plum-pudding and brandy sauce. But, although the applause was short, it sufficed for Edward Redding, who stole to the orator's side and whispered in his ear:

"Remember. I've got the manuscript. You begin with 'I have the greatest pleasure' and you end with 'below his deserts'? Go ahead."

Disdaining his prompter, Albert Rambury began to speak. While he kept exactly to the agreed text, he surprised and delighted Redding by the cordiality of his manner. Instead of barking out his praise of Coggin like a hated lesson he spoke it with what seemed to be warmth and conviction. The truth was that there were some drops of human blood in this avaricious and ambitious young man's veins after all, and that for the moment he abandoned himself to the prevailing generosity. What was more to the point, he felt unspeakable relief at having been stopped short in a most perilous attempt at revenge which might have recoiled terribly on his own head. Both Coggin and Redding would be out of Bulford in

another hour; and even at the awful price of five hundred pounds he was cheaply rid of them.

"I have the greatest pleasure in supporting you, Sir George, this evening," he said, "and in paying my modest tribute to the talents—I may say the genius—of Mr. Coggin, as well as to his invariable integrity. Reference has been made to a recent misunderstanding of a business nature. I think I may claim to know as much as any man in Bulford about that matter, and I say emphatically that I have never transacted business with a more honorable man than Mr. Coggin. My contribution to the testimonial has been described as a large one. I hope that next time a fund is opened in Bulford I shall not be expected to subscribe on the same scale. Indeed I hope you will give me a rest for a long time, seeing that I have made a very great effort to give this testimonial a good start. I call it a great effort, but I do not regret it. This sum of two thousand three hundred and sixty-seven pounds which has been collected surprises us all; but in handing it to Mr. Coggin we all feel that, large as it is, our testimonial is still below his deserts."

Mr. Rambury had often concluded a speech, well pleased with himself; but this was the first time that an audience had been equally pleased with Mr. Rambury. Somebody called out "Three cheers for Bertie Rambury," and the cheers were accorded vociferously. The largest subscriber sat down beaming. He even turned his head and wagged a friendly nod towards Coggin. He had entered the hall determined to be Mr. Albert; and now he was more than content to be Bertie.

Mr. Woodley was the next speaker. Edward Redding had decided that the solicitor's penitence was genuine, and that it would be unwise to pin him down to a speech prepared beforehand. Redding therefore was as much touched as the rest of the people when Mr. Woodley said:

"Open confession is good for the soul. I stand here in a



white sheet. You all know that I am a solicitor, like my father before me. Young Mr. Coggin came to me as a client. I charged him as much as anybody else, and took his money; but I did not do my whole duty by him. To his face I was polite and painstaking; but in my heart I was so mean and ignorant as to despise him because he is a self-made and self-taught young man, the son of a marine-store dealer. Mr. Coggin has never been ashamed of his beginnings, so I know he will not mind what I am saying. I ought to have been proud to act for such a man, but I was a snob. In my office the most prominent sight is a pile of black boxes lettered with the names of titled and rich people, although I have not done business for some of those clients these last ten years. I suppose I should have been ashamed to have a black box lettered 'Mr. Henry Coggin.' I am a born Conservative and I hope to die one; but there has been too much of this spirit in Bulford.

"Let nobody praise me for subscribing one hundred guineas. I am merely handing back to Mr. Coggin his own money, which I did not fully and fairly earn. This is justice, not generosity. I have felt better ever since I decided to impose on myself the humiliation of speaking as I am speaking now. Pray don't think that I am preaching to you or that I am presuming to take the place of any man's conscience; but if anybody has done Mr. Coggin a wrong let him, with the chairman's permission, undo it now and make the testimonial still bigger."

Mr. Woodley sat down so suddenly that everybody was startled. Furthermore, his words had fairly taken away the breath of the listeners. Some of the notables on the platform were visibly shocked and pained. For a few seconds Sir George Batwood lost his head. He turned awkwardly to Edward Redding for a cue; but before help could be given

a strange medley of sounds rose up from the audience. The gallery had begun to applaud, while some persons in the body of the hall were hissing out "Hush" or crying "Order, order!" A tall thin man had risen upright, near the front. Everybody knew him; for Mr. Ambrose Mawby was not only the most important solicitor in the county but also one of Bulford's wealthiest citizens.

"Mr. Chairman," he said, speaking rather curtly, as if against his will. "I cannot be silent after Mr. Woodley's challenge. In the affair at which he has just hinted, my firm acted against Mr. Coggin. I had no personal knowledge of the dispute at the time, and had heard nothing of it until this testimonial was mooted. My firm acted on a client's instructions and cannot fairly be blamed. At the same time I do not care about retaining the rather large fees which came to us, out of Mr. Coggin's pocket, in circumstances which entitle him to sympathy. I subscribed only a guinea to this testimonial. I now make it a hundred, and I wish Mr. Coggin success."

The meeting had taken a turn which called for a tactful and experienced chairman. Puffer Batwood's tact was small and his experience in ruling meetings was limited to a couple of parochial committees. While he was wondering what to do the helm was jerked out of his hands. A woman's shrill voice shrieked from the gallery:

"I done young Coggin outer 'arf-a-crown, a year ago come Midsummer, an' I'm goin' to pay it back into this 'ere testymonium."

A jovial uproar followed. Many voices demanded of a certain Bill Haycocks if he was "goin' to fork out them two bob." When a red-bearded fat man, as broad as he was long, rose indignantly from the front row of the gallery and shoved his way out towards the door at the back it became

evident that this was Mr. Haycocks himself. He departed amidst good-natured volleys of derision with the florin still in his pocket and on his conscience.

Meanwhile little notes were being passed up to the platform, variously addressed to "young Mr. Redding," "Redding, Esquire," and even "Sir Edward Redding." The first note ran:—

*I still think H. C. had himself to blame, but here is that five pounds. Don't announce this.*—W. BARWELL.

The second: *I give sixteen pounds more. Don't put down my name: only initials.*—MICHAEL GOFF.

The third: *I ask Mr. Coggin's forgiveness. The thirty pounds shall be paid by instalments. This to be kept private. Somebody who is on the platform to-night led me to do it.*—H. S. CHIPPENDEN.

There were six or seven such notes in all, enclosing or promising ninety-eight pounds. The audience, having promptly guessed the nature of these missives, became more and more vociferous, until the meeting threatened to lose every shred of dignity. A strong hand was needed; and it appeared. The Mayor, a genial and able man who had learned how to handle crowds when standing for Parliament as the candidate of the unpopular side, moved up to Sir George Batwood and said:

"The meeting is getting out of hand. You have kindly put me down in the program to make the presentation. I suggest your calling on me at once."

"Silence for His Worship the Mayor," cried the more serious citizens. There was a momentary hush; and then the Mayor's masterful but hearty voice filled the hall, ending all the ferment.

"Some years ago," he said, "years before I had heard of

Mr. Coggin's talents, I made the acquaintance, on a holiday, of a great musical composer. That is to say, he always spoke of himself as a great musical composer; and I suppose he ought to have known. I found him a dirty, drunken, dishonest, conceited, selfish, long-haired prig; and his compositions were rubbish. Throughout this meeting I have been thinking of the contrast. There are many people now-a-days who tell us that poets, painters, actors, sculptors, and musicians are a law unto themselves, and that it is mere vulgarity to ask that they should conform to the same common codes of morality and honor. To-night, as Mr. Coggin played the organ so grandly, I said to myself: 'Bulford ought to be sad. We are losing not only a fine musician, a composer of genius, but also a young man who has set a magnificent example to every one of us in hard work, in honorable dealing, in sobriety, and, above all, in generosity.' On behalf of the town I accept with gratitude his thousand pounds. But it is within my knowledge, my recent knowledge, that for years he has been doing good by stealth, and that he would 'blush to find it fame.' When he could n't afford it, I find he has given his scanty savings . . ."

As if a lighted match had been dropped into a basket of Chinese crackers, the gallery rattled and crackled back:

"That's true, your Worship. He giv' my kids a Chriss-muss tree!"

"It's the poor as 'elps the poor, my Worship."

"Coggin bailed me out twice, before the beak."

"'e come and read books to me ole father."

"He jumped into the canal when I was nearly drowned."

"Harry Coggin paid for poor Bob Brown's go-cart."

"I know, I know," thundered the Mayor, spreading out his hands as if to push back the noise. "I could tell you more than you could tell me. But I beg you be silent. Our hour is nearly up. Time and tide and the 7.55 wait for no man.



The blunt truth is that we are all making an immense fuss over Mr. Coggin to-night, but we none of us gave him much help or encouragement when he wanted it most. I am as much to blame as anybody. There was a genius in the town and I, as Mayor of Bulford, never troubled to find it out.

"To make amends, I ask you all to accompany Mr. Coggin to the station. Let there be no horseplay, but let us give him an enthusiastic yet orderly send-off, which shall not be below the dignity of our ancient town. Let his last impression be of Bulford at its best.

"I have one duty more." Here the Mayor took two slips of paper from Mr. Brand. "The testimonial, up to this moment, amounts to two thousand, seven hundred pounds, four shillings. The treasurer having deducted one thousand pounds, I hand Mr. Harry Coggin a check for one thousand, seven hundred pounds, four shillings."

It was not until the Mayor stood on the oak table, holding out his watch and pointing to the dial with comical gestures of despair that the throat-rending, ear-shattering cheers died down. Not even at the declaration of the poll after a fiercely fought election had Bulford men and women raised so enormous a noise.

"Up with him," bellowed somebody.

In a moment the Mayor was lifted down and Coggin was hoisted upon the table. Amidst a deep hush he beheld the beaming, eager faces. For a whole hour that morning, Edward Redding had sat coaching him in a speech of thanks which, though five minutes would have sufficed for its delivery, bristled with telling points. But in that moment of awful silence Harry's memory snapped; and, like a broken chain flashing through the hawse-holes of a ship in an unfathomable fiord, the speech sank with hardly a splash into the abyss.

The conquering hero gasped; stammered; choked; lurched.

He might have fallen if broad shoulders had not closed round him.

Edward Redding sped to the rescue.

“You’ve stunned him with kindness,” cried Redding. “He’ll soon come round. But before he begins to play ‘God Save the Queen’ for us, I propose something which will include our votes of thanks to Sir George, and to His Worship, and to the Treasurer. I propose: ‘Three cheers for everybody.’”

They made it three times three, and would have trebled it again if Harry Coggin had not blared out the Anthem with every stop and coupler drawn.

## CHAPTER XIV

**I**T was not the gathering in the Town Hall but the procession to the railway station which had loomed biggest in Redding's program for Coggin's last evening in Bulford. Until a few minutes before the meeting began he had expected a somewhat perfunctory hour of stilted speech-making, warmed up twice or thrice by a little excitement over Albert Rambury's huge subscription and by some good-natured curiosity about Coggin's organ-playing. As a boy Teddie Redding had endured unspeakable boredom in Bulford Town Hall when polysyllabic clergymen came down from London to make charitable appeals or to deliver abstract orations; and therefore it did not occur to him that cordiality and simplicity could ever gush forth from such arid and flinty soil.

During the whole course of the meeting Redding's lieutenants had been zealously at work. Followed by a mysterious van with a tarpaulin hood they had knocked at every door of every house in Station Road. In many an instance they were balked; because the head of the house was absent from home and present in the Town Hall. The little shops, however, were all open, and practically every tradesman in the thoroughfare readily accepted the bundle of flags and the box of Chinese lanterns which the van disgorged by the dozen. Before half-past seven had struck, Station Road had ceased to be the meanest street in Bulford and had been translated into Latin. Bunting flapped or clung everywhere. Over and above the flags distributed by Redding's helpers the inhabitants hung out sundry Union Jacks and Royal Standards

which they had bought a year before for the marriage of the Prince of Wales. The setting sun would have dimmed the glories of the lanterns if express directions for hanging them in the shadow had not been given; but its glorious light ripened the tints of the flags into a rich and glowing splendor which Venice herself might have envied. Nor was cheerful sound lacking. Every moment another window was opened sharply by some householder just returned from the Town Hall. Every moment the kindly jabber of the onlookers grew quicker and the shouts of excited youngsters rose louder.

At as good a pace as the throng would allow, the carriages came grinding round the curve. Lord Bulcaster had lent his famous chariot with the dappled grays, and Mrs. Hilliard her brougham and pretty chestnuts. In these vehicles and in two hired carriages rode the Mayor, half-a-dozen aldermen and councilors, Mr. Redding, and Mr. Brand. Finally, in Sir George Batwood's carriage, came the baronet and his delicious young consort, Mrs. Hilliard, and Henry Coggin. As they entered Station Road the narrow street, like a canyon blazing with tropical flowers of every hue, hailed them with a sound as of plunging, thundering cataracts.

"I can guess your thoughts at this moment, Slogger," chuckled Sir George. He was in great spirits, and the coldness of manner which his old friends were beginning to resent had been wholly thawed out of him by the ardors of the meeting. To tell the truth, this young gentleman felt mightily pleased with himself, and was already indulging hopes of a public career.

"Yes. I was thinking of the torchlight procession thirteen years ago," answered Coggin simply. "I was remembering how I slipped out of the arm-chair and went home while Mr. Redding's father was making a speech."

Harry's head was not turned. Knowing the fickleness and shallowness of Bulford, and having lived for a week behind



the scenes with the stage-manager, he did not flatter himself that this was a spontaneous and genuine demonstration. Indeed, if he erred at all, it was in underestimating the number of his sincere admirers and well-wishers, and in assuming that the whole outburst had been engineered by Edward Redding.

The gloomiest stretch of Station Road is at the further end where it curves a second time and runs due north. But, as the carriages rumbled through, these last hundred yards were like a magician's garden. Paper lanterns of all shapes and colors swung like tongueless bells in the lazy air. Some were pear-shaped, some like accordeons, some as round as the world; some amber, some grass-green, some violet, some vermilion. In the window-boxes, tiny many-hued lamps beamed like fire-flies and glow-worms amidst the dwarf nasturtiums and geraniums.

Just as Lady Batwood and Mrs. Hilliard were feeling that they had cried "how charming" and "how pretty" rather too often, a droll hap came to their relief. At a window framed in flags and twinkling with lights a bustling mother suddenly held up a child to see the great ladies and the famous Mr. Coggin. The infant, stung to wrath at being plucked from his cot and firmly believing that he was about to be flung into the street, opened his mouth so enormously that it seemed to be much wider than the window. His yell of rage, when it came, was lost in the general hubbub, but his mouth seemed to grow every moment bigger.

"By Jove!" cried Sir George, a few moments later. "Redding has excelled himself here. Hark! Look! Bands. Torches. And banners."

Along the darker side of the station square were ranged Bulford's three brass-bands, united for the occasion under one conductor. They occupied the long veranda which was used at ordinary times as a shelter for a few "growler" cabs and hansoms. Thirty torch-bearers flanked the musicians, right

and left. Nearer to the station buildings in the full light of the June sunset stood deputations from Bulford's societies—Foresters, Hearts of Oak, Ancient Buffaloes, and the rest. Above them huge square banners bellied and squeaked on their gilded poles in the rising breeze. As these banners had been painted in the most frightful *ex voto* style, they made an extraordinary impression on Lady Batwood, who had never seen the like before. One of them, with the legend "Union is Strength" in silver letters on a sky-blue ground, shewed two enclasped hands. The hands protruded from two stiff and starchy white cuffs which, in their own turn, peeped out from the coal-black sleeves of two slop-suits, amputated as cleanly as two cod's heads on a fishmonger's slab. Another banner represented a Forester or Ancient Buffalo on an iron bedstead expiring in the midst of medicine-bottles, while a bearded Head Forester or Chief Buffalo in a parsonic frock-coat handed the sorrowing widow a ten-pound note. But the bravest banner of all was borne by the smallest of the deputations. From a fine confusion of coiled ropes, Union Jacks, bales, guns, swords, pruning-hooks, plow-shares, and Bibles, the British Lion and Britannia shewed fangs and brandished a trident against some invisible Frenchie on the further shore of a raging blue sea.

"See, the Conquering Hero Comes" burst out from the impatient musicians like a gust of red-hot lava impetuously riving asunder the side of a crater. The carriages seemed to be forcing their way through a churning flood suddenly let loose and mounting to their axles. The keen senses of Coggin were reminded of one day when he almost lost his life urging his horse and cart across a ford which had become a torrent, while rattling hailstones thrashed him in the face and a blatant gale strove to tear the very life-breath out of his lungs. As in that storm of wind and hail, so in this clamor of trumpets and shoutings, he simply ducked his head

and set his teeth. He would have reached the station doorway without one glance to the right or to the left, without so much as raising his eyes, if Edward Redding had not leapt down from one of the hired carriages to prompt him in his duties.

"Stand up. Bow. Salute. Wave your hat. Make a speech. Kiss your hand to the ladies. Do anything you like, except sitting there like a propped-up mummy," said Redding. "The people will be offended."

Helped by a shove from Sir George, Coggin stood up half dazed and slowly uncovered his head. What to do next surpassed his wit; but fortunately a raucous shriek cut short the ordeal. The train which was to take him away came hammering into the station, whistling horribly, and blowing off clouds of steam.

As the seven fifty-five always halted for seven minutes at Bulford, most of the passengers were accustomed to jump down to stretch their legs. Hearing the brass bands and the cheering they were fired with curiosity and the platform became a scene of great excitement. Harry was painfully aware of people thronging round him and talking about him. He was also vaguely conscious of Edward Redding, who was helping the porters to hoist some new valises into a first-class compartment.

When the Mayor and the other notables pressed his hand and heartily wished him God-speed, Harry came to himself. He returned the hand-clasps cordially, gratefully, respectfully. The city fathers fell back, leaving the young man alone with Lady Batwood and Mrs. Hilliard. Suddenly the elder lady thoughtlessly exclaimed:

"How selfish we are, dear Sylvia! We are keeping Mr. Coggin from saying good-by to his own family and friends."

"How selfish of us!" echoed her ladyship. "Mr. Coggin, do pray forgive us."

"I have no family or friends," said Harry, flushing up. In his utter loneliness he took a short step nearer to these two kind women; but almost in the same moment, shame smote him and he fell back. Surely, he thought, the two ladies' words were meant as a hint, almost a rebuke against his presumption in sticking so long and so close by their sides.

Mrs. Hilliard divined his thought. All that Edward Redding had told her about this strange orphan youth, without one near relation, without one comrade in the world, rushed back into her mind; and she hated herself for her tactless, careless, wounding speech. She tripped towards Coggin, with a stammering explanation on her tongue's end. But at that very instant a bell rang loudly, the whistle of the engine shrilled out once more, and harsh voices bawled "Take your seats, take your seats, please!" Redding, who had already said farewell to the ladies, darted forward and whisked hold of Coggin's arm.

It was then that Mrs. Hilliard performed the action which caused a few people to call her, ever afterwards, a splendid woman, while it led many others to describe her as "very nice but a little bit funny sometimes." With the eyes of the Mayor, the aldermen, the councilors, the passengers from Demehaven, and the railway officials upon her she suddenly pounced on Harry Coggin, the rag-and-bone man's son, held him tightly against her great cameo brooch with her two shapely, silk-clad arms and kissed him, not on the cheek but on the lips, as she had never kissed her own nephew Alfred Tranter, and as she had not kissed any man for twenty years. Then, plucking her arms free, she almost threw Harry Coggin, like a package, at Edward Redding, and ran away with a burst of tears.

The composer Coggin sat hunched against the blue box-



cloth cushion, dazed and dumb. The screams of the engine and the fortissimo of the brass bands no longer reached his ears. There was a red rose in his hand, but he did not know that it had been thrust there by the entrancing Lady Batwood. Even Edward Redding, sitting in the corner opposite, seemed to be a mere phantasm. Nothing was real save the kiss. It danced all over him, like sunbeams on running water. It hung like garlands of flowers over his eyes, round his neck, his limbs, his wrists, his ankles, fettering him softly and filling his nostrils with sweet scents. It ran and climbed all over him like a magical vine, its branches full of tiny song-birds, trilling everywhere and chirping secrets in his ear. It wove cool shade between him and the scorch of the sun. It built up a bulwark against the brunt of the storm. It poured suave balm into all the wounds of his spirit. It spread the dear sense of a mother's presence like a warm vesture over the stark outlines of his loneliness. And withal there was a wild zest as of an inaccessible height miraculously visited if only for one eagle moment.

In Harry Coggin there was nothing of the snob; yet this patrician kiss meant more, incalculably more, to him than all the guineas, all the trumpets, all the banners, all the torches. Throughout all the years of his life this delicate and superfine youth had been held at arm's length by gross and dull-minded "betters." He had been despised and rejected, doomed to spend his best hours and energies among the cast-off trappings and chattels of people who, despite their advantages of birth and fortune, were mostly unworthy to tie his bootlaces. In his solitary home, when the door was locked and the world shut out, he had savored fine food, lingered over fine wine, handled fine glass, fine linen, fine silver, fine porcelain. He had read the fine words of poets in four languages, he had pored over fine engravings, and above all he had interpreted the finest music. But fine fellowship with fine human beings

had always been denied him. Customers, acquaintances, protégés, rivals, enemies, spongers he had known by the dozen; but never a friend. And now, in the very last minute of his loveless life in Bulford a woman, a lady, a beautiful lady, had suddenly transfigured him by a kiss which, in one and the same moment, was both the healing caress of a mother by the hearth, and the wonder-kiss of a fairy princess in some blossoming thicket of romance.

The enchantment was broken by Edward Redding, who cried out: "Good Lord, Fritz Coggenheimer, what's up? You look as if you've had a damned good hiding, and as if you've been chucked out of Bulford amidst universal execrations instead of being the central figure in my grand tableau vivant 'The Apotheosis of Virtuous Genius.' It has been stupendous. I can hardly believe it myself. Listen. We can still hear them playing 'See the Conquering Hero goes, High triumphant o'er his foes, Wipe his eyes and blow his nose.' Hang it all, Slogger, shake yourself up. I've kept all my promises; now have n't I? I swore you should leave Bulford with all flags flying. They flew, did n't they? Also the torches torched, and the speakers speeched—except yourself—and the drums drummed and the trumpets trumpeted, and the horns horned. In your pocket-book you have checks and drafts to the tune of nearly four thousand pounds. You're finished with business worries and with Master Albert Rambury for good and all. In this envelope are your passports for Holland and Prussia. In your hand is a red rose, given you by the most adorable young beauty in the country; and, by the way, you did n't even say 'Thank you' for it. Furthermore, you have been kissed by another beautiful lady, while all the favor she bestowed on my poor self was to shake hands and send her love to my mama and papa. Herr Professor Coggenberger, you are the pampered darling of the gods."

He ceased chattering; because the train, which had been clanking and pounding along at not much more than a walking pace, came to a dead standstill. They were barely clear of the smoky sheds and stacks of coal and long lines of trucks which disfigured the country for a quarter of a mile or so beyond Bulford station.

"What 's up?" asked Redding.

As he spoke the train lurched once more into clumsy motion. It bumped onward about a furlong and stopped again, where the railway ran through fragrant meadows. Edward jumped up impatiently and thrust his head out of the window to see what was wrong. Evidently there was trouble with the engine; for the driver and fireman had dismounted and were plying huge tools upon the wheezy locomotive of the Demehaven, Bulford and Wynchurch Railway Company. Redding turned his gaze over the landscape. The June dusk was deepening in the copses, but he could still make out the tower and spire and high roofs of Bulford half a mile away. A flight of rockets and the faint bleatings of kettle-drums and cornets in the distance told him that the citizens were unofficially prolonging the festivities.

Redding was about to call Coggin to his side when something suddenly met his gaze and drew from him a low whistle of anxiety. Trying to conceal his vexation he turned round, taking care to plant his broad back across the window. In the hope of keeping Harry occupied until the train should start again, he resumed his chattering in loud and quick tones.

"We must admit that Albert Rambury . . ." he began. But he got no further. Above the simmering of the engine, above the muffled talk of passengers in the adjoining compartments, above the far-off drone of the brass bands, above the swishing of the tree-tops in the rising wind, Henry Coggin heard a sound, a rhythmic sound which he knew as a

maiden knows the step of her lover. Springing to his feet he gained the window at one stride; and when his guardian would have hindered him he simply swept Edward Redding aside as if he had been a mere curtain blocking the view.

Galloping grandly across the daisied grass, and scattering with his light hoofs the golden petals of the buttercups, on came the horse Bay Rum. First he threw up his proud head, tossing his mane on the breeze; and then he seemed to thrust his muzzle into the ground and to upheave his hindquarters and his streaming tail in a frenzy of joy. By some strange fate, Bay Rum's new owner had put him to graze in this field of all fields on this night of all nights.

The train began ambling on once more. Bay Rum kept pace with the squeaking wheels. Sometimes he trotted gently, looking up at Coggin and whinnying his delight. Sometimes he pranced and neighed. When he came to a high fence, dividing his field from the next, he took it in one glorious leap, as if on Pegasus' own wings; and for the twinkling of an eye his exquisite, slender body seemed to be poised in the air, on a level with Coggin's eyes and almost within reach of his desolate hand.

At the end of the second field the train halted yet again, where a limpid brook poured through a culvert and spread out into a clear pool overhung by silver birches. On the Bulford side of the pool rose a vast hedge, untrimmed for years and years—a hedge so dense and wide and high that no mortal horse could have leapt it. But there was a round gap in the gay tangle of honeysuckle and whitethorn and bramble and briar; and through the gap Bay Rum gazed up at the train on the low embankment; gazed full into Harry's face. He expected his old master to leap down, to smash through the thorns and nettles, to jump astride his bare back and to race home with him over the sweet fields to the old stable, slapping his neck and murmuring the old fond names. And when



nothing happened the big eyes filled first with bewilderment and then with unutterable reproach and infinite sadness.

Harry Coggin stared into the gap. Between Bay Rum's ears he saw a bit of Bulford. He saw St. Michael's battlemented tower and the high gables of Bulford School. There was his world—a harsh world, a lonely world, an unjust world, but his own world and all the world he knew. There were the scenes of his long struggle, of all his brief triumphs. There were the scenes of his long struggle, of all his brief triumphs. There were the only roofs which had ever been his homes. There was his mother's grave. There was Yellowhammer Lane. There was his baptismal font by the gray old bridge over the Skilbourne. There was the stately gracious lady, the new-descended goddess who like a second mother had kissed his lips and held him to her breast. And there—no, no, not there, but here, under his very eyes, waiting and despairing, was his horse, his good horse, Bay Rum.

Edward Redding heard a dull moan and saw a hand slip out groping for the handle of the door. His first impulse was to hurl himself roughly on Coggin and to bark contemptuously: "You fool!" But a great grace was given to him from Heaven. Hardly knowing what he did and what he said, he laid hold of Coggin's arm and pleaded in tones as gentle as a woman's:

"Harry . . . poor old Harry . . . it's nearly over. For God's sake, for your old friend Teddie's sake, for my father's sake, come away from that window. Come, and sit down."

As he uttered the last syllable, the engine belched out an enormous cloud of steam; and the evening wind sucked the white vapors through the gap in the hedge-row, veiling Bay Rum from sight. The driver shrilled his whistle loud and long. To Harry it was a wail of anguish; but to Teddie it was a Roland's horn-blast of challenge and defiance to the unknown world beyond. The coaches jolted into life and

dragged themselves clear of the pool and the silver birches, just as Edward Redding gently forced Henry Coggin back into his corner.

Making up for lost time, the train dashed noisily over a viaduct and began fussing upwards into the gloomy pine-woods and the untilled heaths of the high country between Updeme and Wynchurch. Darkness was falling and a chilly wind blew from the moorland into the carriage. Twice, thrice, four times, Edward Redding tried to frame the opening words of a conversation; but twice, thrice, four times his tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. The money and what to do with it; the efficiency and cordiality of the Mayor; the bad drinking-water in Holland and the good wines of the Rhine; the best precautions against seasickness—all these topics came to his mind in turn, and he could not get out a word on any single one of them. Harry's death-white hard-set face forbade him.

Edward Redding's proud plumes began to droop. Hardly an hour before, amidst the din of the trombones and the guttering of the torches, he had felt like Hannibal and Julius Cæsar and Napoleon rolled into one; but now he was beginning to reckon himself a swaggering, heartless brute. For weeks he had been mastering Coggin and dominating Bulford by sheer insolence. What was his victory over Rambury save imprudent bluff? The hurrying days had been full of transporting excitement and satisfaction for himself; but by what right had he assumed lordship over another human being, body and soul?

By degrees, however, this mood of self-reproach passed away, giving place to a strange confidence and exaltation such as Edward Redding had never before experienced. There was nothing mystical in this mercurial and strenuous youth's nature, nor was he religious. Or rather, he was religious at second hand. He rarely prayed himself; yet he revered his father's prayers. He had hardly any direct vital belief in God; but he

believed in his father's belief. And had not his father sent him to Bulford with an express command to bring Harry Coggin away? Had not his father solemnly declared again and again his conviction that Almighty God had some great work to do in and through Harry Coggin? As he sat in the clattering train, Redding recalled that strange moment in Yellowhammer Lane thirteen years before, when all three of them had gripped hands in a solemn pact.

From his corner he glanced at Harry Coggin, still in a dumb agony. Pity filled Redding's heart; such pity as he had never hitherto felt for man or woman or child or beast. If God had great work for him to do, it was perhaps not strange that Harry must be schooled and steeled by hardship, persecution, disappointment, bereavement, loneliness. Yet why should Harry Coggin be always a man of sorrows, always acquainted with grief, while he, Edward Redding, abounded in every good thing? A sudden sense of Harry's high destiny overwhelmed Redding until he, who rarely bowed the knee to God, could have knelt down in reverence before this marine-store dealer's son with whom he had been eating and drinking and swimming and riding and planning and working for weeks, in patronizing intimacy but never in simple human friendship.

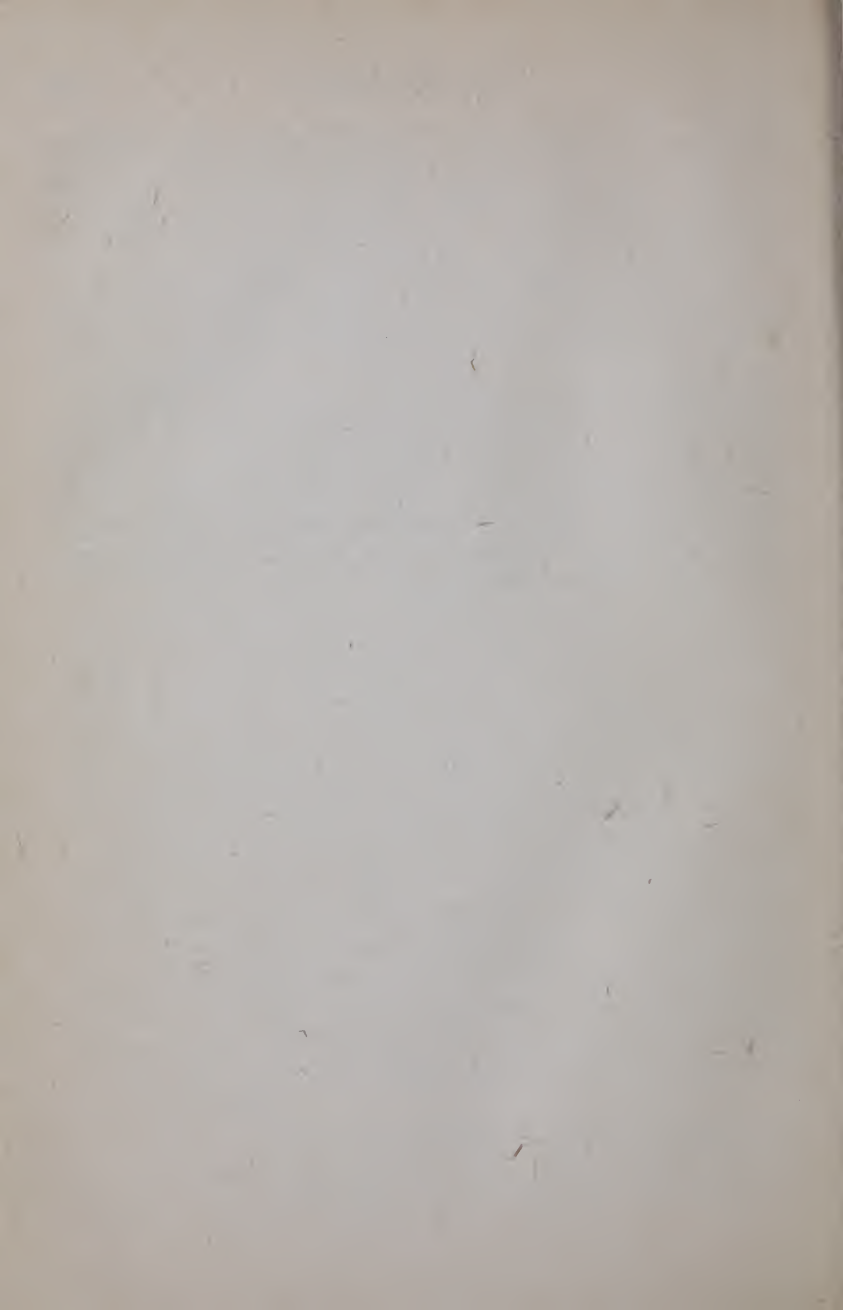
And what about that plan of his for making Harry into a Heinrich, a German? Was it not enough to have torn him from his native town without driving him from his country too? Edward pondered this question deeply. But once again a great confidence and exaltation filled his mind and soul. Not only was it too late to draw back, but he felt curiously sure that in forming and executing the project he too was helping in some vast mysterious divine plan, that he too was God's appointed servant.

And yet . . . when the last glimpse of day was gone and the only light in the carriage came from a sickly oil-lamp overhead, Edward Redding's heart bled for his companion

afresh. Half-an-hour had passed without a word, without a movement. If only Harry Coggin had upbraided him fiercely, or had broken down weakly and wept, Redding could have endured it; but this white face, these tight lips, these wide-open eyes filled him first with pity and then with fear.

The engine shrieked and the train plunged into the long Wynchurch tunnel. And as the coaches rocked with a deafening roar through the reek of sulphur, Redding quailed at the thought that this mountain over their aching heads was a joint in the very backbone of old England—the old England from which he was driving Harry Coggin away. He shrank further back into his corner, afraid of the pale, dumb, staring orphan without kith or kin, without horse or hound, without wife or child or sweetheart, without hearth or roof-tree, without a city, without a fatherland.





**BOOK II**  
**THE WANDERER**

*Sit sumpsero pennas meas diliculo et habitavero in extremis maris: etenim illuc manus tua deducet me: et tenebit me dextera tua.*—PSALMUS cxxxviii, 9, 10.

## CHAPTER I

**E**XCEPTING Harry Coggin, the passengers aboard *The Queen of the North Sea* on Thursday, June 2nd, 1864, would have described their voyage to Rotterdam as uneventful. A favoring breeze blew steadily from the north-west, and the sky's dome, resting firmly on the sharp horizon, was almost without a cloud. A Swedish bark carrying timber to Newcastle, a smoky packet-boat from Antwerp painfully breasting the wind, and a few fishing-smacks, were the only craft encountered by *The Queen* during her two-hundred-mile run from the Humber to the Meuse. For Coggin, however, the trip was an unbroken wonder and a long delight.

Until *The Queen* turned Spurn Head and fussed out into the dancing and shining German Ocean, Harry had never beheld the sea. At Demehaven he had often smelt salt water and had even boarded sea-going ships: but the town itself was at the landward end of a navigable estuary, twenty miles from blue water.

After breakfast at the bustling inn where they spent the night in Hull, Edward Redding had wrung Harry Coggin's hand with these parting words: "How I envy you, going abroad for the first time! You are of an age to understand, to compare, to appreciate. My father and mother took me twice to France and once to Switzerland before I was nine years old. But let me give you, Harry, one strong caution. Don't expect too much; and then you will not be disappointed. Foreign countries are full of strangeness and charm; but they are not quite 'new heavens and a new earth.' After all you've read and heard, prepare to be a little disappointed



with the sea, a good deal disappointed with Holland, and a bit contemptuous of the Rhine-land, especially Cologne. Gnaw now and then at a hard biscuit and you won't be sea-sick. Don't open this letter which I wrote for you last Sunday until you are out of sight of land. As for thanks, I tell you again to shut up. Good luck and good-by."

The sea did not disappoint Harry Coggin. It captivated him. He gazed and gazed upon it, oblivious of the march of time, sometimes peering down at the white curds churned out by the thudding paddle-wheels and sometimes raising his eyes to the far-off rim where skies and waters met. The sea was to him a vast music. It was not only music for his ears; because, beyond the swishings and drummings of the water, beyond the chaunt of the wind, there seemed to be a huger music, a music visible rather than audible, a music bewilderingly intricate in its multitudinous parts, yet of god-like simplicity as a whole. Two hours must have passed in this copious quenching of his long parched spirit's thirst for the immense and the unearthly; and he might have gone on leaning over the rail for two hours more if the steward had not touched his arm and reminded him that the mid-day meal was ready.

Although *The Queen of the North Sea* was famed for her airiness and sweetness, Harry would have found the stuffiness of the saloon unendurable if he had not been immediately engrossed in his table-companions. Saving a family of tourists who kept themselves rigidly apart at the smaller table, the passengers were English, Dutch and German merchants and commercial travelers, with a few sea-faring men on the way to join their ships at Rotterdam. A good deal of the conversation was exchanged in foreign tongues. To his dismay Harry, who could read Dutch slowly and German fluently, found that at first he was not able to distinguish these languages one from another. High Dutch seemed as low as Low, and Low Dutch as high as High. Here and there he recognized words,

such as *geld, wein, meer, dampschiff, bröd*: but these familiar terms whirled past him, like corks, on a torrent of verbs and particles which meant no more to him than so much gibberish. Heavily discouraged, he rose from the table at the earliest possible moment and hurried upstairs to the deck.

The engine, which made noises and smells disproportionate to the work it was doing, drew him out of his vexation for a few moments: but suddenly its rancid odors and unwholesome heat awoke a qualm strong enough to remind him that there was such a thing as sea-sickness. Retreating hastily to a less unsavory spot, he tucked a rug about his knees and began to gnaw a ship's biscuit, as Edward Redding had commanded. When peace had returned to mind and body alike, Harry brought out his mentor's letter and broke the seal. This is what he read:—

*Bulford, Sunday, May 29. '64.*

EXCELLENT HARE COGGENHEIMER.

*Prosit. Ihre Gesundheit.*

*You will read this, if you are not too sick, upon the bounding billow. I am writing it at Mrs. Hilliard's, while you are having your mysterious Sunday off. By the way, mein Heinrich, I'm not so sure that I ought not to chercher la femme.*

*After the meeting next Wednesday night we shall know your monetary position to a penny and I shall jot down a postscript to this letter. We know enough, however, for our main purpose. Broadly, I advise that you invest the whole of your capital except three hundred pounds, immediately. With perfect security, it should bring you an income of about one hundred and fifty pounds per annum.*

*As for the three hundred pounds, I most earnestly beg you to spend them all in Germany. Living is cheap in the Fatherland and you could eat heartily and wander widely on a pound or two a week. But don't be too frugal. This is the first holiday of your life, so you have about a dozen Long Vacations*

to make up. By all means avoid extravagance and keep away from the cosmopolitan caravanserais: but be equally careful to avoid niggardliness and to shun the humblest kinds of bed and board. Go often to concerts, to the theater and to the opera—they're wonderfully inexpensive in Germany. By the way, mein Hare, I suspect you've never been to a theater or an opera-house in your life. What hours you have in store!

On twenty pounds a month you can fare sumptuously, sleep decently, drink curiously and hear good music seven times a week. That is to say, your three hundred pounds should last you until the end of August next year. You must look on this £300 as money invested, which will be fruitful as long as you live. By August '65, du klevver Heinrich, you will have learned to write and speak German like a native. Your prodigious memory and your genius for languages will make the task both pleasant and easy. Keep your eyes open for German manners and customs. Jot down in an indexed book any little proverbs and colloquialisms and homely sayings which are not in the dictionaries. Wriggle inside the German skin. You have read the German classics; now get to work on their newspapers, their popular novels, their daily trash. And learn to drink their beer, to smoke their tobacco.

In acquiring the spoken language, you will save time—and money, too, in the long run—by employing a teacher to correct you. Beware of the young German who offers to "exchange conversation." When it comes to exchange, your German always wants the better of the bargain. Pay him his fee—it will be very small—and command his services, with no nonsense.

While I am not competent to advise you concerning your musical studies, let me recommend you not to begin them too soon. Enjoy a long, lazy holiday first of all. Have what the German student calls "a wander-year." But don't let music drop. Whenever you are in a town where there is a good



*organ, just stifle your bashfulness and cultivate acquaintance with the Herr Kapellmeister till he lets you try the instrument. Make yourself known, as a brother artist, to the conductors of orchestras and even to the directors of opera-houses. They will welcome you to rehearsals; and, although I'm not a musician myself, I imagine that a rehearsal can teach you more than a performance.*

*After a few months, you will decide what musical center to live in—I suppose it will be Leipsic—and what frowsy old ruffian to study under. But even when your hard work begins, do not cease to study Germans and Germany until you know them back and front.*

*One counsel more, mein best. Although you have been wretched and a failure as Henry Coggin, Englishman, I have observed these last few days that you drop your eyes and pucker your brows whenever I mention your turning German. Why? If our royal princesses turn German for high reasons of State, why should n't you turn German for high reasons of Art? Is a symphony less important than a dynasty? Now here is my counsel. Whenever you feel you won't and can't be a German—whenever you feel that you must and will be an Englishman, then (in spite of what I've said about keeping away from such places) go and spend seven nights in one of the first-class hotels, where the traveling English stay. Or spend seven days steaming up and down the Rhine. Unless I'm much mistaken, this will always cure you of wanting to be taken for an Englishman any more.*

*Now for my final requests. Write to me every month; and to my father every quarter, as of yore. Don't make an ass of yourself by falling in love, without my full knowledge and express permission. And, if from time to time you have a few hidden odd thalers to spare, remember how much I should like you to collect some thoroughly German bric-à-brac for me, such as long pipes, beer-mugs, hock-glasses, pots, hatchments, prints,*



*and so on. Pack them up and send them to my London address. Mit ein tausend good wishes, Ich bleibe*

*Your devoted Freund für Ewigkeit,*

EDWARD REDDING.

The postscript, which had been scrawled in pencil, was as follows:

*You have £3842 1. 2. Spend £342 1. 2. without a qualm. While you are outre-mer, interest will be accumulating on £3500 in old England. Be young and careless. Live only one moment at a time. As for turning German you don't need to decide for another year. Auf wiedersehn.*

The breeze had weakened and the sunshine had strengthened when Harry Coggin finally thrust Edward Redding's letter back into his breast-pocket. He was on the point of casting the rug from his knees and of springing up to resume his work when he remembered that he had no work to do, no workshop, no task-master, not even a pricking and prodding conscience. At first the situation appalled him. He felt like a man who, after toiling for days through a tangled and thorny forest, comes out suddenly into the daylight and finds himself on the brink of a precipice, looking down upon a summer sea, without a sail, without a shore. From his earliest days, Harry had always had duty, duty, duty upon his earnest mind. Even at the age of five it was his task to sort out old nails and to separate the scraps of white paper from the blue and the brown.

Edward Redding's words came back to him: "Be young and careless." And as he sat and pondered the matter he perceived for the first time how hard his lot had been; how little of life's feast he had tasted; how pallid and dumb had been his boyhood and youth; and from what a treadmill the marvelous Teddie had delivered him.

Something came between him and the sun. It was a fishing-smack, ripping up the bright water as she shoved along under a vast spread of sail. The canvas, of a glorious amber hue, seemed to be alive as it stretched and eased, eased and stretched, in the wind, like the flanks of a striving horse. It was the first time Harry had seen such a sight. He leapt from his seat and ran for a nearer view. As he gripped the rail, the wind tore off the crest of a little wave and dashed it full in Harry's face. Like waters of baptism, the cool salt spray instantly woke him to new life. A man on the deck of the fishing-smack waved a huge hand and hailed him with some jovial greeting which was lost in the noises of crunching water and slapping wind. Harry shouted back. It was a shout without words; a shout like the glad cry of a toil-chafed animal let loose to roll and kick in unmown grass.

He gazed eastward. England had long ago faded from sight. He reminded himself that beyond the horizon England still stood—England and especially Bulford. He tried to picture the old town, to guess what his successors were doing in the chapel, and what the townsfolk were saying about the meeting in the Town Hall. He failed. Bulford seemed dead—as dead as Herculaneum and as deeply buried. Indeed, beside himself, there seemed to be only three truly living and breathing people in the world—Teddie Redding, and Mrs. Hilliard, and the man on the fishing-smack still waving to him across the widening stretch of churned-up water. No. There was a fourth—Bay Rum, his good horse Bay Rum, whose tail and mane would have streamed so grandly in this frolic wind.

## CHAPTER II

LEFT to himself, Henry Coggin would certainly have sought out one of the cheapest of the Rotterdam hotels—the cheapest of all, so long as it was clean. He was not a miser; but twenty years of social ostracism in Bulford had formed in him a habit of preferring obscure corners and backwaters. Redding, however, had foreseen this danger and had resolved that his ward's first day and night abroad should be properly spent. He knew that it is the first step which costs; and he had confidence that the second step and the third, the hundredth and the ten thousandth, would be along the right path, provided a sound beginning could be assured. Just as *The Queen of the North Sea* had made fast almost under the trees in leafy, noisy Rotterdam, the steward came up to Harry very respectfully and said:

“I beg pardon, Mr. Coggin. No offense, sir, but I believe this is your first acquaintance with foreign parts. I have given my word to your friend Mr. Redding to see that you find your way safely to a house which Mr. Redding recommends—a house where the landlord is n't a robber and where the vittles and wine are n't poison. So with your leave, sir, I'm going to put you in a fly and in a jiffey you 'll be inside the Hotel Haas, a comfortable house, where you don't need to speak the Dutch lingo. I can't leave the ship just now: but I shall have the honor, God willing, of paying my respects to you to-morrow morning, sir. I must n't forget to give you the book from Mr. Redding. I wish you good-day, sir. Always at your service, sir.”

The book was a guide to the Rhine-land, written in English

by a bookseller of Coblenz and printed in Leipsic. Before Harry could fairly examine it, he found himself beset by formidable officials from the customs-house. The steward, however, came to his aid and he was not even asked for his keys. Within half an hour of *The Queen of the North Sea's* first bump against the quay wall, Harry was standing in a foot-bath in his bed-room at the Haas Hotel splashing himself from head to foot.

Edward Redding's was a wonder-working name in this hospitable house. It turned out that he was constantly recommending it to his friends and that he had himself stayed thrice under its roof. An abundant and interesting meal soon made its appearance, accompanied by half a bottle of racy Piesporter beautifully cooled. After luncheon Harry obtained a supply of small coins and wandered out to see the sights. His guide-book glowed about the Boyman's Museum: but on enquiring the way thither he was informed by a Dutch gentleman who spoke English that the building had been burned down only a year before, and most of the pictures with it.

Harry soon found, however, that there were pictures, hundreds of glowing pictures, to be seen without entombing himself in the stuffy interior of a museum. At every step he encountered something enchanting or astounding. In a sunny square, bordered by a giant canal, the traveler stumbled into the chattering, fragrant midst of an open-air flower-market. He fled bashfully from the buxom Dutch flower-maidens, but not without marveling at their picturesque head-gear and especially at the spirals of solid gold projecting from their foreheads.

The Groote Kerk, or Great Church of St. Lawrence, rose before him. Taking them two at a time with his nimble legs, he soon climbed the three hundred and twenty-five steps to the top of the tower. As he leaned, looking downwards and upwards, northwards and southwards, eastwards and west-



wards, he wondered how Teddie Redding could have said that the Continent was not "new heavens and a new earth." The heavens were certainly new heavens; for like an inverted bowl of turquoise and mother-o'-pearl, they came down and met the horizon at every point, like the sky over the open sea, without one distant mountain-range, without even one low hill to rob the lucent hemisphere of a single inch. And the earth was a new earth. As flat as a chessboard, nearly a thousand square miles of humming, smiling country lay in full sight. The waterways, which had looked peagreen and smelt worse than brackish as Coggin walked beside them from his hotel, seemed to become a gem-like blue as they flowed through rural Holland, sometimes cutting narrow lanes straight through the fields, sometimes spreading out like lakes or estuaries. The droll sails of hundreds of windmills, flipping round and round, gave to the beholder who looked at them too long the feeling that he was gazing not at a patch of the real world but at a vast toy, at a set-out of Noah's-ark trees and buildings, at a painted model run by hidden clock-work. Here and there where the light nor'-easter suited them, barges with big sails shining swan-white in the strong sunshine seemed to be moving across the dry land, like haywains through English meadows.

An inscription on the parapet informed Harry Coggin that the more distant belfries within this field of vision belonged to towns whose names he had long known well—the Hague and Delft, Dort and Leyden. But even these far-off towers fascinated him less powerfully than the spectacle immediately below him. Excepting his hurried glimpses of Hull on the short drive from the inn to the steam-packet, this was Harry's first sight of a large town. It was also his first ascent of a tower; because the crumbling stairway which led to the top of St. Michael's at Bulford has been closed to the public for many years. Having nerves of steel he leaned well over.

More than two hundred feet below, pigmies pottered hither and thither with the absurd insistency of black ants. Through the fresh June foliage of trees which looked as if they could have been pulled up with one hand and transplanted into flower-pots, he could see toy boats moving along gutters of bronze-blue water. Thousands and thousands of painted houses made gay silhouettes against the sky with their stepped gables and their squeaking, glittering weathercocks. All the while there rose up from the chimneys a weak smoke; and from the streets a dull hum, pricked through by the cracking of whips and the cries of children.

Harry spent more than a week in Holland. Armed with cards of introduction from his Rotterdam landlord, he found comfortable quarters and pleasant people everywhere. With a little help from waiters and from chance acquaintances he soon commanded enough of the language to make known his wants and to understand the directions he often asked for in the streets. Traveling in the Nederland was distinctly dear, running up to at least a guinea a day: but he had brought from England nearly twenty pounds of current cash which had not been reckoned in Redding's £3842 1. 2. and he felt it would please his friend if he spent this extra money in seeing something of the Low Countries without overmuch counting of the cost. Including ten florins which he paid at Haarlem, as a fee for a special recital on the world-famous organ, his total expenses for a week did not amount to a ten-pound note; and although he would have been staggered a month before at the idea of spending even forty shillings on a holiday, somehow it seemed quite natural to be tipping sacristans and paying a couple of guilders for a bottle of Rhenish.

Since English pounds and Dutch florins were first minted, nobody could have got richer value for the coins he left behind him than Harry Coggin during those sunny days in Rot-

terdam and Delft, in the galleries of the Hague, on the sea-shore at breezy Scheveningen, in learned Leyden, and in Venice-like Amsterdam. The blaze of tulips had burned low on the bulb farms, but the storks were as proud as ever in their high nests, the decorators were smothering the water-side summer-houses with vivid green and blue and yellow paint, and even the "dead" cities which he visited by steamboat from Amsterdam were all alive with bustling people in the old national dress.

Harry loved it all. He loved the rollicking carillons which seemed hardly ever silent in the huge brick belfries. What was the short broadside of the Bulford bells compared with these batteries of bells, big and little, which could stamp along like a giant in seven-leagued boots and at the same time spin all round the bumping tune an accompaniment as light as a spider's web? He loved the pictures—not only such world-famous canvases as Rembrandt's "Night Watch" and Paul Potter's "Bull" and van der Helst's "Banquet of the Arquebusiers," but also the less notorious master-pieces of Flinck, of Vermeer, of Hals, of Steen, of Hobbema. He loved the copper-beeches and the lime-trees overhanging the canals: the leaning towers; the vast meres with the vanes of steeples and the tops of windmills just peeping above the embankments. He loved the brisk, light, innocent Bavarian beer: the liberal meals, especially the bewildering breakfasts of smoked beef and rusks and butter and cheese and strawberries: the language, so often like a kind of English spoken from a larger mouth; and especially the life of the cafés and inns where you could talk English or French, German or Dutch, as you pleased.

The youth's only disappointment was in the churches. Throughout the old hard days at Bulford, when he used to pore over illustrated books of travel with never a hope or a

dream of setting foot on a foreign shore, the engravings and descriptions of dim and huge cathedrals had impressed him more than everything else. In Holland, however, he looked in vain for majestic and mysterious temples, where the common daylight could not enter until it had filtered through painted glass, staining itself with the blood of martyrs, purifying itself in the snow of virgins and catching glory from the golden crowns of saints triumphant. In vain he sought for the pale sweet mists of incense, for the sonorous antiphons, for the myriad candles, for the slow processions with tinkling canopies and brodered banners, for the peasant devotees huddled before a smoke-blackened image and a silver lamp in some shadowy recess between enormous piers.

Harry soon gave up trying to penetrate the interiors of Holland's great parish churches and old cathedrals. The Dutch Reformed Church like the Bulford-on-Deme Baptists and Methodists, kept the temples locked up except when somebody was going to preach. At first, Harry persisted in his effort till the doors were opened: but, as a rule a precious hour had to be wasted. Often the key would have to be unearthed at some old book-shop or office a long way from the church. There was nearly always a fee to be paid to a grumpy sexton or to a member of his family: and when, after all this expenditure of time and money and temper, the big keys turned in the locks at last, the church-interior was almost sure to prove a disappointment. In place of a stone vaulting there was usually a poor wooden ceiling, while lumbering pews and stalls obscured the architectural lines, and acres of white-wash chilled and cheapened the walls and columns. Now and then the cicerone would shew a curiosity such as a carved pulpit or a grandiose monument of some seventeenth-century Dutch admiral, in a pagan style. And if Harry thought little of these desecrated naves and aisles, it was evident that the



sacristans thought still less; for they usually kept their hats on their heads the whole time and even went on smoking their pipes.

On his first morning in Amsterdam, after waiting awhile opposite the barred and bolted portals of the cruciform, fourteenth-century Oude Kerk in the Warmoeestraat, Coggin was working along the Oudezijds Voorburgwal towards the quays when he noticed two women in black, with what appeared to be prayer-books in their hands, hurrying into an old building. Glancing towards the door, he saw that it was open; and, having already begun to acquire a sightseer's habits, he did not scruple to mount the steps. On the threshold a strange, pleasant odor met him and suddenly brought him to a halt. Where had he inhaled that faint but insistent perfume before? Although it was so weak and elusive, it asserted itself even above the rankness of the broad canal which crawled along a few yards eastward of where Harry was standing.

He remembered. This was the smell of incense. At Bulford, very rarely, certainly not more than half-a-dozen times in his whole life, Harry Coggin had ventured inside the tiny Catholic Chapel in Tripp Street. The place had always repelled him; because it was not merely small and poor but mean and ill-kept. An aged and infirm priest ministered there to a handful of Bulford's poorest people. Indeed, if Harry had been pressed to say what he remembered of Tripp Street Catholic Chapel, he would have named only the grimy windows, the whirligig ventilator which had long ceased to whirl, some statuettes daubed with many faded colors and a few vases of paper roses. It would not have occurred to him to mention the lingering scent of incense. And yet, as he halted almost in fear on this old doorstep in wealthy, famous Amsterdam, the ghostly sweetness was closer to him than his own breath. As if on a magic carpet, worn thinner than a

rose-leaf dried in an old book, Bulford and all its memories were borne to him across the Deme, across half England, across the North Sea, in the twinkling of an eye.

Two more women with prayer-books brushed past him and entered what he now knew was a church: but, although he immediately recovered his self-possession, Coggin did not dare to follow them. For all he knew to the contrary, some sort of Romanist Mother's Meeting was toward; so he reluctantly turned away. An hour afterwards, however, he came upon another and newer Catholic Church, of more obvious ecclesiastical character. This too was open: and he ventured inside.

The same fragrance of incense pervaded the place: but all else was unfamiliar. In St. Michael's and in St. Peter's at Bulford and in the great white-washed churches of Rotterdam and Leyden and Haarlem he had seen decorous communion-tables: but this was his first sight of a High Altar, with a painted reredos, with a crucifix, with six tall candlesticks and with a row of seven lighted lamps hanging before it. The frontal, of finest linen, was embroidered with the words *Adoro Te devote, Latens Deltas* and there were many other tags of Latin to be seen in the stained glass windows and on the stenciled walls. The Dutch language, however, was not absent. For example, Harry was deeply impressed by a series of vivid paintings, seven on the right-hand wall and seven on the left; and he noticed that the legends under these pictures, which represented stages of the Sacred Passion, were all in the vernacular. Here and there were religious paintings in mellowed frames and life-size statues of saints.

For ten minutes or so, Coggin had the church to himself. At length a man came in—a young man of about Harry's own age—and made a genuflexion. Beginning at the first of the fourteen pictures, the stranger compassed the circuit of them all, kneeling for a few moments before each painting and say-

ing some prayers. This task done, he knelt more deliberately in the nave, with his gaze bent on the High Altar, his lips moving the while. Then he rose and went away.

Perceiving an arched opening to the right of the chancel, Harry went forward on tip-toe and found a shallow chapel. Several candles were burning on a stand; and above a low altar there stood amid white flowers a life-size statue of the Virgin Mother of God holding the Babe in her arms. The sight-seer was about to pass on when a strong beam of sunlight suddenly illumined the image, from the small white foot peeping out under the Lady's blue robe to the great jeweled diadem which crowned her golden hair. A memory even more powerful than the incense brought Harry, for the second time, to a standstill. In his lonely house at Bulford there had been an old print, one among hundreds, which never failed to enchain him. It was an engraving "before letters" of some altar-piece, a Madonna and Child. Austere ecclesiastics might have condemned it, on the ground that it was outside the hieratic tradition; while superfine art-critics would have sniffed at it because it gave great and immediate pleasure even to the untrained eye. Upon Coggin it had cast and fixed a spell; not by its religious appeal but by the power of the Maiden's gracious loveliness. The artist had not portrayed an unworldly bloodless *Dei Genitrix* but had preferred to dilate upon the human beauty of that second Eve from whose chaste body the Eternal Word was made flesh.

The statue on which the June sunshine glowed down in this Dutch chapel had probably been carved and gilded by some competent and enthusiastic journeyman, who had found inspiration in the very picture from which Coggin's old print was copied. To Harry, however, it was as if a Galatea had warmed and quickened into life. His engraving at Bulford was after all only a flat sheet of paper, printed brownish-black on white, and not more than twelve inches by ten: but this

queenly image was the size of life, with the flush of life in the cheeks and with the rounded contours of life as well. Yet it was instinct with the dignity of great sculpture, and was free from the slightest suggestion of dressed-up wax-work. Harry beheld his picture come to life; but not to such life as his own. It had come to the life wherein corruption has put on incorruption and wherein this mortal has put on immortality.

From that morning onwards, Coggin practised the rule, observed by nearly all true travelers, of never passing an open church door without taking a peep inside. This meant that he examined the interior of at least one Catholic church every day. The shells of these fanes were generally unpretentious: but when once the threshold had been crossed there was nearly always some novel architectural arrangement, some legend or unfamiliar saint told in stained glass or on canvas or in carven stone, some pithy sentence in sonorous Latin, some significant change in the color of antependium or vestment. Little by little it dawned upon Harry that Catholicism, which he had vaguely regarded as a mere antiquarian survival, like the Pyramids of Egypt, was pulsing with life; and that the houses of death in Holland were the huge chilly white-washed churches of the Reformers, sealed up all the week like enormous tombs. In the museums and picture-galleries he saw countless religious paintings which had been executed centuries ago: but in the Catholic churches, living and breathing men were chiseling new images, or plying brush and palette-knife on new altar-pieces. This conviction of the abounding and actual vitality of Catholicism was deepened in him one afternoon by the sight of some pile-drivers forcing tree-trunks, over fifty feet long, perpendicularly into the swampy ground. These piles, he was told, were the foundations of a new Catholic church.

At Utrecht, whither he ran for half a day from Amsterdam,



Harry's new interest in ecclesiastical things was whetted by a recollection that he was in the city where the dank heresy of Jansen, Bishop of Ypres, at last bore its bitter fruit of schism. In the space of a single morning, he visited not only the remnant of the ancient cathedral which had passed into the Reformers' hands but also the cathedrals of the Jansenist archbishop, still in schism, and of the Catholic archbishop, in communion with the See of Rome. In his early boyhood, when tattered and torn books of dogma and polemics had made up by far the larger part of the printed matter which came under his hungry eye in the marine-store yard, Harry had read omnivorously; and now, like a steam of bubbles rising to the surface of the water from some long-sunk wreck suddenly ripped open by the prongs of a casual anchor, all sorts of odd facts and fictions about these Jansenists and this town of Utrecht and the bull *Unigenitus* came gurgling up from the deeps of his memory.

By the end of his first week in Holland, Harry had grown bold enough to kneel with about a hundred worshipers all through a Low Mass. But his heart was in his mouth. He dreaded every moment that somebody would buttonhole him. In the Baptist Chapel at Bulford it was the custom to buzz round every stranger like flies round a jam-pot; and not until he had regained the street did Harry lose his fear of some friar or Jesuit pouncing upon him.

The truth was that these churches, like his old engraving of the Virgin and Child, did not interest Harry Coggin primarily on religious grounds. He was attracted by the novelty of their warm decoration and varied ceremonial, so unlike the bare stone and the white surplices and the plain services in the half-dozen Gothic churches which he had seen in Bulford and its neighborhood. He was attracted also by the chance of hearing a little organ-playing. Most of all, however, he liked the churches for their quiet, their solitude,

their restfulness. Apart altogether from religion, it was good to have some place where one could sit down between two tramps through museums instead of having to visit and re-visit the cafés for too much Bavarian beer.

### CHAPTER III

ON Friday, June 10th, just as he was facing an under-done steak in a restaurant at the corner of the Damrak, Harry felt a tap on his shoulder. Looking up, he recognized a young man, evidently a traveler like himself, whom he had noticed three or four times already in various public places. The number of foreigners visiting Holland so early in the summer being small, Harry was sure of the young man's identity. The young man seemed no less sure of Harry's. In a pleasant and easy tone he said:

"We are fated to meet. Let me see. Delft one; the Mauritshuis at the Hague, two; the old round castle at Leyden, three; the hut of Peter the Great at Zaandam, four; and this table with the raw steak on it, five. Five times, if not six. Can I take this vacant place beside you?"

He sat down and ordered a meal, giving instructions in French. Coggin had passed so many days without conversation and his mind was so full of new ideas that he was delighted to worry through his beefsteak in company with a lively compatriot. The stranger had traveled widely in France and Spain, in Italy, and in all the German-speaking states. He seemed to have lived for pictures and to have retained wonderfully exact recollections of the hundreds he had seen. About Munich he was somewhat contemptuous; but he glowed at the memory of Florence and Venice; of Paris; and especially of Madrid and the Prado. Harry Coggin knew practically nothing of Spanish painters, save Murillo, and he listened eagerly to the remarks his table-companion poured out concerning Velasquez and Goya and a Toledo artist called

"the Greek." At the end of the meal, the stranger burst out:

"Look here. You've seen all the regular lions of Amsterdam, the Fodor Museum and the Arti et Amicitiae and so on: but I'll wager you haven't seen the Jan Six Gallery! There's a marvelous, unfinished Rembrandt there, and my favorite Hobbema, and Lord knows what else. Then there's another little private museum, in the Heeren-Gracht, with a stunning lot of the Little Masters. You can't get in without influence, but I have a letter here from our Minister at the Hague."

"Minister?" echoed Coggin, mystified. During his life in Bulford he had only heard the phrase "our minister" applied to Pastor Clupp, of the Baptist Chapel.

"Yes. Our Minister. Our Ambassador, or whatever you like to call the Johnny. Anyhow, he's not a bad chap and his letter always does the trick. Like to come with me? Right. Let's mizzle."

Before Harry could recover from his astonishment at having hobnobbed with a young personage of such distinction that he could not only claim the acquaintance of ambassadors but even call them Johnnies and chaps, his new friend had called the waiter and paid the two bills. Coggin's expostulations were in vain. The friend of ambassadors simply ignored them and began a lively chatter about the influence of Michael Angelo on Rubens. Never had Amsterdam seemed so delightful to Coggin as at that moment. The people in the streets looked prosperous and happy. The avenues of elms were at the height of their June glory, and the waters of the broad canals twinkled in the sun and made a merry sound against the prows of the gaudy barges.

While they were waiting in the entrance-hall of the old house once belonging to Burgomaster Jan Six, the patron and friend of Rembrandt, Harry's companion said:

"Better have your card ready, eh?"



Harry winced. He had never boasted a card in his life. Further, Edward Redding had expressly begged him not to have cards engraved for his journey, but to suppress the name of Coggin as much as possible. Fortunately the man-servant re-appeared and opened a tome like a family Bible. This turned out to be the visitors' book. Taking up a quill, Harry's conductor forgot all about cards and signed his name, in large, easy writing, "Colin Guy Withers Huntly-Martin." Then he handed the pen to Harry and moved off to examine a bust by Artus Quellin.

With nobody looking over his shoulder, Harry wrote, in his stiff, almost uncial, but rapid script, "Henry Coggin." Mr. Huntly-Martin's signature sprawled across seven inches of paper, while Harry's did not exceed an inch and a half. The homely surname looked mean and forlorn indeed in such company; for higher on the same page a Roman princess, an English archbishop and a Russian Grand Duke had set their august autographs. Perhaps Edward Redding was right. Perhaps the name of Coggin would never do.

On completing the tour of the house, it was Mr. Huntly-Martin who conveyed suitable largesse to the attendant, and, as they came out again upon the canal bank, he said: "That was worth while. And the pictures weren't the best part. By Jove, I wish I could have burgled that old tulip-shaped silver goblet and one of those round Delft tiles. By the way, remind me to tell you later on about the sort of Delft tiles they have in Portugal, instead of mural paintings. Now for those Little Masters. Let's slope."

After the Little Masters had been visited, Mr. Huntly-Martin brightened up and exclaimed: "Why not a glass of Advocaat? I know the best shop in all Holland for Advocaat; and that means the best shop in the world."

"I've seen the name," answered Coggin frankly, "but I don't know what Advocaat is. Is it a kind of Schiedam?"

“No. It’s a kind of egg flip. It’s made of yellows of eggs, mixed years ago with old brandy. You can take it with a spoon. The place is quite near here. Let’s bolt.”

Harry enjoyed his glass of Advocaat, which was like a thin yellow cream redeemed from sickliness by a little Cognac; but he became uncomfortable when his fellow-drinker again paid the reckoning. A happy idea flashed into him and he said:

“Come. This will not do. You have been paying for both of us these last three hours. I want my turn. Will you be so kind as to come and dine with me at my hotel, the Zeven Provinciën? It’s quiet, but they have good claret and Rhine-wine.”

“I’m your man,” responded Mr. Huntly-Martin heartily. “And the sooner it’s feeding-time the better. I loathed my luncheon. Another Advocaat? No. Better not. Too sickly. Let’s hook it.”

The Zeven Provinciën, to which he had been introduced by his Rotterdam host, was an inn whereof Harry had no cause to be ashamed. Most of the clients were sedate and substantial Dutch people; so dinner was always ready soon after five o’clock. Thus Harry was spared the expense and anxiety of arranging a special meal. As for the wine, he had heard a gentleman, the night before, praising the hotel’s Château Brane Cantenac ’48. He ordered a bottle of this, which his guest pronounced the best claret he had tasted for a month. In short, the dinner turned out a great success. Although this was the first time Harry had entertained a fellow-creature outside his own house, he did not feel ill at ease; partly because his recent dinner-parties in Bulford had taught him table-manners and table-talk of the hour, and mainly because Mr. Huntly-Martin proved himself one of the most entertaining and entertainable of guests.

All of a sudden, however, Mr. Huntly-Martin stopped talk-

ing and became morose. Coggin looked round. The other diners, whose animated chatter had made the table cheerful, were passing through the doorway. Meanwhile the sun had sunk so low that the room was growing shadowy and chilly.

"This gives me the blues," grunted Mr. Huntly-Martin. "I can't stand it, can you? Let 's absquotulate."

Coggin had never heard the word "absquotulate" but by this time he had guessed that his new acquaintance boasted a rich thesaurus of synonyms for *exire* and that "mizzle" and "slope" and "bolt" and "hook it" all meant merely "go." And as he too felt depressed by the surroundings, he readily agreed to a stroll.

"Ever been to Tiddens', eh?" asked Huntly-Martin.

"No. I should like to." Coggin answered. He took it for granted that Tiddens' would be a café where some special beer or curaçao or "half-om-half" was to be imbibed: and therefore he followed his guide with pleasant hopes. In the leafy square called the Rembrandt-Plein, still warmed and brightened by the setting sun, he would gladly have sat down to watch the bustling people, from the front of his favorite café; but Mr. Huntly-Martin strode on and crossed the Binnen Amstel where it was fully three hundred feet wide. After the chilly wind blowing along the water, the narrow old streets on the north bank seemed snug, especially as many gas lights were being lit in the windows. They turned into a still narrower lane.

"Here we are," said Mr. Huntly-Martin.

He had hardly spoken when a door was jerked inwards, as if somebody had been eagerly awaiting this visit. The place did not look like an ordinary café, but Harry had seen too many unfamiliar interiors that afternoon to be surprised by the curious little vestibule to which they were admitted. It was bare of chairs and benches. Indeed, it held nothing save a huge plaster-of-paris statue holding a lamp. Harry felt

an immediate and violent distaste for this big image. Throughout a whole week he had been looking at pictures and statues in the public galleries and had gradually come to perceive that some modern painters and sculptors, while pretending to represent the nude, were simply copying the naked. This buxom plaster-of-paris lampbearer did not strike him as a woman but as a mere female. It was not a work of art but a thing deliberately made for sale to some ignoble buyer.

A very fat old woman appeared. As she planted herself alongside the pedestal, even the statue seemed classical and gracious by contrast. The old woman was very ugly, very voluble, very gaudy. She hailed Mr. Huntly-Martin as if he had been 'a long-lost son, gesticulating a great deal with her unpleasant bejeweled hands and jerking out a lot of French, too rapid for Harry's unpracticed ears. He had a vague idea that the discussion had to do with some new kind of punch which his lavish friend was ordering to be brewed. At last the woman turned to him and said:

"Diss vay."

She pushed open a swing-door and stood aside for the two young men to pass. Harry recalled the skill with which Mr. Huntly-Martin had gained entrance to two other Dutch houses only a few hours before, and he went forward expecting to see some old-fashioned kitchen or perhaps a little collection of domestic brass and pottery. No doubt, rich old Amsterdam was full of treasures not mentioned in the guide-books.

A bell clanged somewhere, and a door at the far end of the short broad corridor was flung wide. In an instant Harry, with a smothered cry of horror and fear, leapt backward. He had never heard or read a description of such a scene; yet his keen, clear instinct revealed to him in a flash the character of the place which he had so innocently entered. The vision seemed to outrage not only his eyes, but his ears, his nostrils,



and all the senses of his body and soul. No wonder he leapt back. It was as though the door of a fiery furnace had been suddenly plucked open, letting a belch of scorching, blinding flame and choking, sickening vapors drive full in his face. He felt a reek of vile tobacco and viler perfumes, he heard a shriek of lewd laughter and the pounding and shrilling of a piano which seemed to be made of iron, and, most horrible of all, he saw through clouds of smoke the inmates of the room.

The gaudy proprietress had waddled ahead: but Huntly-Martin heard Coggin's dull cry and hurried back to him.

"What's up?" he asked anxiously. "Ill? Tummy-ache? Dutch cholera? What is it?"

If Harry had said: "Look here, you're mistaken. Hang it all, I draw the line somewhere. I thought Tiddens' was a café or an exhibition. I'm off," Mr. Huntly-Martin would probably have felt ashamed of himself and would have mizzled or hooked it or absquotulated in Harry's company to some decent beer-garden. But, although the marine-store-dealer's son had rapidly learned the table-manners of the day and could use the approved jargon about pictures, it was less than a month since Edward Redding had begun to extricate him from the life of a hermit. So he did not even attempt to behave like a man of the world. Instead of explaining, expostulating, arguing, he surrendered his whole mind to one question—the question of escape, or flight, from his captors. It did not occur to him that Huntly-Martin was merely an immoral and idle young man who had simply made a colossal blunder. He felt he was trapped in an ante-room of hell, with fiends, hags, witches, syrens, sorceresses, demons tingling to pounce upon him.

Two jerks of Harry's powerful shoulder sent Huntly-Martin spinning back into the house and bumped the swing-door outwards. Three strides of Harry's lithe legs carried him to the more massive door which shut him off from the street—

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a door studded with nails and fastened by many locks and bolts. He had just laid hold of a sliding knob when the frightful old vrouw wheezed alongside and jostled him away. For a moment it looked as if she was locking him in more securely, and the desperate Coggin was confronted, for the first time in his life, with the problem of whether he could do physical violence to a woman. Springs clicked, levers rattled; and then the door, pushed by a light wind outside, moved inwards, revealing the street and the passers-by.

"If he vish to go 'vay, he can go 'vay," said the furious hag in a voice which seemed to be as shrill as a scream although it was not much louder than a hissing whisper. "But go 'vay like gentlemen."

"Yes," rapped out Huntly-Martin, who had followed her. "Clear out quietly. Don't make a damned fool of yourself. We don't want the police. If there's a row, you'll jolly well be in it. Confound you, sir, what did you mean by saying you wanted to come to Tiddens'? How was I to know that you were a white marble statue of Innocence, just off the pedestal? Skedaddle. Cut it. Be off. And, next time, mind whom you shove with that shoulder of yours, or there may be a bit of trouble. Melt."

"Good-night, babba, go 'vay home to mudder," hissed the old fury as she thrust him into the street. Her hiss could not have been more terrible if all the envenomed serpents in the world had been spitting out poison together. It seemed to splash Harry's cheek, like something scalding and unclean.

For fifty yards or so Harry stumbled forward, heeding nothing but the fact that he was free. Then he perceived that he was penetrating deeper and deeper into the haunts of shame. He passed brightly-lighted cafés where grinning creatures sat in the windows or stood at the doors and hailed him as he passed. Evidently the place where Mr. Huntly-Martin had taken him was not the vilest of the vile. It

seemed as if he would have to retrace his steps, even at the risk of running the gauntlet of Madame Tiddens' rage and scorn once more: but he came upon a short cross-street and at the end of it he caught the gleam of a broad canal.

Beside the cool water he began to breathe more freely. But where was he to go? Not to his inn: because Mr. Huntly-Martin would probably seek him there, with more taunts. Not to his favorite café; because the life of the town, which had appeared so honest and jolly, was now all suspect in his excited brain.

He hastened on, running rather than walking, in the unconscious hope that he would soon be in open spaces and pure air. At Bulford, amidst his heaviest griefs, it had been his habit to seek the quiet banks of the clear river or his sacred grove in Yellowhammer Lane. Bulford was so small a town that in twenty minutes he could be clear of the sickly gas-lamps, the stamping horses, the jaded people, the stuffy streets; and, whenever he left the moil behind and felt turf instead of flagstones under his feet, he always seemed to have walked away from his troubles as well as from the houses. But here in Amsterdam it was different. On and on he went; but still he was among people, people, people; houses, houses, houses: and although Deme might be called a mere brook in comparison with the Singel and the Rokin and the other great canals, Harry began to crave for its pure air and sweet waters, like a traveler in a desert.

His whole body and soul suddenly loathed the ubiquitous, brackish, almost rotting smell of Amsterdam's countless waterways. Why had he left his own dear town, his own breezy country-side, his books, his piano, his organ, his horse, his simple pleasures? Why had he so weakly allowed Mr. Redding's prankish son to turn him out of house and home and fatherland? It rushed over him that he must turn home, that very moment, home again to Bulford, where he could

once more shatter and down his troubles in great organ-music, rushing and roaring like a mill-race; where he could begin each day with a deep dive into the purifying Deme; where he could pelt across country on the willing back of his best friend, Bay Rum; where he could live frugally and work hard; where, although difficulties and dangers might be daily visitors, vice never showed him her leering face. Yes. He must go home, this very night.

The wrathful old woman's parting gibe hissed again in his head. "Go vay home to mudder!" And in that moment a sword pierced his soul. "Home to mother"; and all the time the mother who bore him was lying quietly under eight feet of Bulford earth. As for his home, strangers at that very moment were tearing down partitions, bundling out his old possessions and painting their own names over the name of Henry Coggin. He had a lock-up cubicle in a London furniture repository, secured for him by Edward Redding, where his books and music were stored, together with his old piano and a new box; but nowhere had he a home. Once more his heart flamed with resentment against Edward Redding. He clenched his fists and swore to himself that he would be back in Bulford, back in the chapel, back facing his foes, back with Bay Rum, before forty-eight hours could pass.

He felt for his watch; but at the same instant the bells of the Wester-Kerk, a few streets away, began a rippling chime. Glancing up he recognized a familiar building, with an open door. Almost but not quite unwittingly, his hurrying steps had brought him to that Catholic church wherein stood the image of the Virgin Mother which had allured him so strangely a day or two before.

Harry entered the church. The nave was chill and dim: but a hanging lamp burned before the High Altar. The tiny, restless flame was like a drop of living blood from a Heart on fire with love for men. Pressing nearer, he saw other lights



twinkling in a side-chapel; and a moment later he was kneeling before the Woman, the gracious, lovely Woman of his old engraving at Bulford. He could hardly resist an impulse to step over the low brass rails and to lay his hot forehead against the small white feet. The mats, the cushions, the chairs, the pictures, the candlesticks, the walls, the windows, might belong to Dutchmen; but he felt as if this chapel and this image were his own, his very own. Without murmuring one prayer, without thinking one definite thought, he remained on his knees, gazing into the beautiful, pitiful face, until an impatient sacristan loudly jangled a bunch of keys and aroused him from his trance.

Harry Coggin walked back to his hotel with a light tread. On descending the steps of the church, he had suddenly decided to leave Amsterdam for Germany that very night. Not that he was afraid. Throughout his life, cleanliness of mind and body had been his master-passion. To Harry the knowledge of the existence of such places as Tiddens' was a rude and sickening disillusionment, but it was not even the shadow of a temptation. All the same, he accepted that evening's experience as a loud summons to move on. He knew that there was a late train by which he could regain his honest quarters in Rotterdam before midnight, and that there was a steamboat starting early the next morning, by way of the river Waal, for Nijmegen and the Rhine.

The streets were full of people, but Harry no longer shrank from them. Sanity and fairness had returned to him and he understood that, in spite of the foul canker which Huntly-Martin had revealed to him, most of the men and women he passed were clean-living, honest and industrious. He even entered his favorite café for a last hurried visit and drank a farewell glass of lager beer. At the table adjoining his own, an innumerable Dutch family party was merrily celebrating some innocent anniversary. Yet Harry did not envy

the bouncing girls and the light-hearted lads; for he knew already in his heart, though not yet in his head, that he too had a Mother and that for him too a home was waiting, walled and roofed, warmed and garnished.

## CHAPTER IV

**T**AKING Edward Redding's advice, Coggin avoided the great cities and began his German travels in university towns and in riverside or upland villages. So rigidly did he follow his friend's counsels that he did not land at Cologne but supped and slept on board the steamboat.

The bank of the Rhine at Bonn was the first stretch of German soil to be trodden by Harry's feet. At that moment he felt it good to be alive. Mounting eagerly to the bastion called the Alte Zoll he gazed across the noble stream, fully five hundred yards wide, towards the peaks and saddles of the Seven Mountains. A hot sun shone from a blue sky upon the shimmering water, but the June heat was tempered by a delicious breeze blowing from the cool hill-tops over the fresh flood. Here and there the slopes wore a thin green verdure, not like grass; and Coggin knew that, for the first time, he was beholding vineyards.

That day in Bonn was a day of marvels. The traveler could have lingered for hours in and around the Romanesque minster, with its two choirs and its many towers and its pillared cloisters. He had never seen a Romanesque church before, and its lines, its masses, its plan fascinated. So did the miles of avenues, the vast buildings of the University, the knots of students, the fountains, and the old houses. With some difficulty he gained admission to a strange dwelling-house in the Bonngasse—the birthplace of Beethoven. As he had never visited Stratford-on-Avon or any other artistic shrine, his first emotions in Germany surprised him. He had expected to be merely interested in this Beethovenhaus; but

when the moment came he was overwhelmed by the mighty memories of the spot and by his own presumption in having thought that he too might write music which should never perish. Twenty minutes later, when he stood in the old cemetery beside the plain grave of his beloved Schumann who had died only eight years before, this conviction of his own littleness and impudence again possessed him. Would a pilgrim ever journey, guide-book in hand, to the birth-chamber of Henry Coggin, in Bullock Yard at Bulford? Would a disciple ever uncover a bowed head over Henry Coggin's grave at . . . ?

At . . . where? The lance of utter loneliness once more drove its sharp length through Harry's soul! Till this moment, in his youth and strength, he had never given a thought to his burial-place: but all of a sudden he realized that, wherever else it might be, he could never rest with his own kindred in the green acre above the rippling Deme.

Shaking off these gloomy thoughts, Harry hastened back through the cheerful market-place and was soon seated in a café on the bank of the Rhine. Mid-day dinner had just begun to be served—watery soup, boiled beef with stewed cherries, an excellent veal cutlet, and a kind of hot cake. Having taken nothing since the night before save a cup of coffee and a buttered roll, the young man was so ravenously hungry that this meal seemed the best he had ever tasted. It was helped by a bottle of Drachenblut—the blood of the dragon slain by Siegfried halfway up the castle-topped Drachenfels, which was in full view as Harry looked upstream through the open window of the café. With such legendary names ringing in his ears and with such sights before his eyes, he had a pleasing consciousness that he was a traveler indeed. And this consciousness was sharpened when a middle-aged German, who spoke English, entered into affable conversation.



On hearing that Coggin had visited Utrecht only a few days before, the German, who was evidently a person of academic importance, questioned him closely about the Old Catholic sect and seemed disappointed at the meager answers he received: but when Henry asked if there were many Old Catholics in Bonn the stranger seemed more vexed and made haste to change the subject. Becoming genial again, he enlarged on several things which were puzzling the young Englishman. He explained, for instance, the meaning and uses of a gigantic bowl or goblet, big enough for half-a-dozen gold-fish, which was being ceremoniously served to a party of roystering students; and he would have given the recipe if his English had not failed him when he tried to name the fruits and flowers which were thrown into the bowl with six or seven bottles of good Rhenish. But his English was again serviceable enough when he proceeded to instruct Harry in the best way of visiting the Seven Mountains, the Volcanic Eifel, and the valleys of the Moselle and the Ahr.

On Midsummer Day, while an almost tropical rain was turning the cobbled street outside his hotel window into something like a mountain torrent, Harry Coggin wrote as follows to Edward Redding:

*Limburg, Nassau,  
June 24, 1864.*

*Dear Mr. Edward,*

*I hope you received my second letter from Holland. It was posted at Gouda, where I saw the windows by the Crabeths.*

*Germany is a very fine country; much finer than Holland. The Seven Mountains are beautiful, but not so savage and grand as the mountains you took me to see last month, before I left Bulford. The rivers are splendid. I have seen the Rhine, the Ahr, and the Lahn; and to-morrow I hope to begin*

*steaming up the Moselle. Good light rowing-boats are hard to find on these rivers; but I get my morning swim. In Holland I missed it very much, and I do not strongly wish to see the Canals again. The Dutch seem to be very clean people at first, until it occurs to you that they scour their things with dirty water.*

*The food here is good and very cheap. Perhaps the soups are rather poor, but they often give me newly-caught trout and sometimes venison. I seldom pay more than a thaler for supper and a bed and breakfast. Even on the steamer they charge only two silbergroschen for a cup of coffee. "Silbergroschen" may sound important but, of course, two silbergroschen are only about twopence-halfpenny. I take your advice, Mr. Edward, and always stay at good inns, without stinting myself. For example I drink wine every day at both Mittagessen, as they call their mid-day dinner, and at Abendessen. I try the wine of the district I am in, nad it generally costs about sevenpence the small bottle. Nearly all the wines are white; but I found some good pale red or pink wine while I was walking up the valley of the Ahr, called Walporzheimer.*

*I think I like the Germans. They are always ready to be friendly and to give you their ideas. You were quite right though, Mr. Edward, when you said that they would rather practise their English than let me practise my German; and sometimes it is difficult to shake them off when you want to go about alone.*

*You said I was to make myself known to the organists. Here in Limburg I screwed up my courage to do so and the organist of the cathedral allowed me to play yesterday. The cathedral is a splendid old building with seven towers, standing high above the river. I felt it was a great honor, being allowed to play. It was strange to be playing an organ once more. There is a piano in this inn, so I am quite musical again.*

Mr. Edward, you told me I would not like the English travelers on the Rhine and you were right. I never show any inclination to address them, but nevertheless they look at me as much as to say "keep your distance and we will keep ours." At Königswinter I felt sorry for an English gentleman and two ladies, because they spoke no German and could not explain that they wanted horses instead of donkeys to go up the hill: but when I tried to be of assistance they snubbed me for my pains. On the other hand, there are some English people traveling in Rhine-land who are not stiff and particular enough. At the Kreuzberg, behind Bonn, I was shown round the Servitenkloster in company with a family from London. They made fun of the Holy Staircase (copied in Italian marble from the staircase at the Lateran in Rome, which is said to be the very staircase trodden by Our Savior's feet when He was brought before Pontius Pilate) and afterwards they made a sad disturbance. It appeared that, some years ago, visitors to the Kreuzberg used to be shown the skeletons or mummies of some dead monks in a vault under the church. My companions had read an account of these corpses in a book by Tom Hood and they were very angry at hearing that the remains were no longer exhibited. One of the party kept demanding "to see the Bishop about it" and another told our guide that they would not mind paying something extra.

All the same, Mr. Edward, I like the English best, in spite of their faults. If I must take a German name (as you say that all composers do, except when they call themselves Italians) I shall still always be an Englishman at heart.

To-day it is raining hard, so I shall spend most of the afternoon studying German. I have begun to make a manuscript collection of words and phrases which are not in the ordinary dictionaries, and I find this task very interesting and instructive. Nor have I forgotten that you want some German pottery and such things. There was a fair at Ober-Lahnstein and

*I found some curious pewter, earthenware and glass there.*

*Trusting and praying that you and your esteemed parents are enjoying good health, and once more thanking you for favors which I can never hope to repay,*

*I remain, Dear Mr. Edward,*

*Your obliged and obedient servant,*

*Henry Coggin.*

Before receiving this letter, Edward Redding had begun to feel a little ashamed of his raid on Bulford and more than a little doubtful of his plan of turning Henry Coggin into a German. But there was a strong strain of obstinacy in his character, and he hated turning back or admitting himself to have been in the wrong. So Harry's letter was good to read. It restored his complacency. Events were proving that he had done right in sending Harry to Germany. But Edward Redding did not show Coggin's letter to his father.



## CHAPTER V

**T**HE costliness of his days in Holland notwithstanding, Harry Coggin found, at the end of his sixth week on the Continent, that he had spent a good deal less than the twenty pounds a month prescribed by Edward Redding. He gave tips liberally and always drank something better than the cheapest tischwein: yet his expenses in the little German towns never surpassed three pounds a week. This discovery so troubled his excessive scrupulousness that, before falling asleep one night in early July, he said to himself:

“To-morrow, God willing, I will have a great day. After my swim I will order a big breakfast, with cold bacon, such as I used to have in Bulford. Then I will get permission to play the church-organ. And after that I will find a horse, for a good gallop.”

Harry's plunge into the gentle Moselle was glorious. As he came to the surface and dashed the water from his eyes he saw the big sun staring at him through the one window of a ruined castle on a hill, high above the vineyards. Breakfast did not exactly reproduce his Bulford repast, but the cold sausages with their terrible names of Blutwurst, Leberwurst and Schlachtwurst were fascinating and tasty.

A thaler to the sacristan, and six silbergroschen to the sacristan's little son for blowing the bellows, sufficed to arrange the affair of the organ; and, as the parish priest was absent on business, Harry drew music from the strange little instrument, to his heart's great easing, for nearly an hour. He was about to leave the church when it occurred to him that

the sacristan might be able to put him in the way of hiring a horse; and after some misunderstandings on both sides the boy organ-blower guided the young Englishman to some shabby stables in a back street of the village.

The four poor beasts which met Harry's disappointed gaze were jaded post-horses, mournfully awaiting their turn between the shafts of the diligence. He was about to move away when the job-master appeared. A lively discussion arose and at last the man wrote some lines on a sheet of paper, which he despatched somewhither by the hand of the boy. Then, opening an inner door, he revealed, in a clean stall, a beautiful black mare which would not have disgraced an English stable.

Harry's command of the German language had so much improved that he was able to begin bargaining. The man, however, shook his head scornfully and muttered some remarks which his hearer was still trying to understand when a loud voice sounded without and a broad-shouldered German came striding in. The new-comer's gait and manner showed at once that he belonged to the squire class.

"Guten morgen, mein Herr," began Coggin nervously, when the stranger had stared at him for ten seconds or so without a word. "Würden Sie freundlichst . . ."

"Bitte, sprechen Sie English. Ich verstehe Englisch. Ich bin zweimal in London gewesen," said the other.

Harry had no difficulty in translating the answer and was immensely relieved at being able to speak English with this brawny gentleman who had been twice in London. Framing his sentences clearly and simply, he explained that for six weeks he had not mounted a horse and that he was trying to find a hack for an hour or two. He added modestly that he perceived there had been a mistake and he congratulated the owner on his splendid black mare.

The German was pleased and they were soon talking horses with much animation. In the end the mare was saddled and

led forth to a spot where the vineclad slopes shrank back from the winding Moselle, leaving a flat green strath between the hills and the river. Clambering rather clumsily into the saddle the mare's heavy master proudly showed Coggin her paces. After galloping the whole length of the strath and back, in a showy style, he dismounted and invited the Englishman to take his place.

The dainty beast whinnied with pleasure at the touch of Harry's lithe limbs and at the caress he gave her as he vaulted lightly upon a back which had too often endured a rider at least two stone too heavy for her. This black mare and the black-haired Harry Coggin seemed made one for the other. Off they went like the wind. The end of the strath was gained in a flash; and thence they flew on along the high-road, skirt-ing the river till they had turned a headland and disappeared from sight. Five minutes later they came racing back and Harry leapt to the ground so radiant with delight that he failed to notice the relief of the German, who had begun to think that his black mare was gone forever.

Having thus failed to lighten his purse by more than the trifles he had bestowed as trinkgeld, Harry ordered at his mid-day dinner a bottle of Schloss Johannisberger, '51, to follow his halbfiasch of thin young Moselwein. The meal was served in a summer-arbor, clad with freely-growing vines, on the river-bank. The diner ought to have been content; for the food was excellent and he preferred solitude to the best of company. Yet he could not abandon himself to simple happiness. Six weeks had passed in idleness. If only he could have helped to shell the peas or to wash his own plates, he would have felt less useless and guilty.

An exclamation from the road, which ran a little above the arbor, made the lonely diner glance up. He saw the black mare's German owner looking down at him. Harry rose at

once and opened the wicket-gate. The German, after hesitating a moment, came into the garden and sat down at the dinner-table, where Harry, seizing the opportunity of acknowledging the loan of the mare, very politely pressed him to have a glass of wine.

The German was on the point of refusing, somewhat curtly, when he caught sight of the label on the bottle—a label showing that the wine was from the renowned estate of Prince Metternich. With a start of surprise he pushed forward a goblet and allowed Harry to fill it full. Having sniffed and sipped it with reverent attention, he half emptied the glass and straightway became a different man. Not that the Fürst von Metternischer Cabinet-wein could affect him so much and so soon. It was rather that the label and the seal shed luster on the young Englishman and dispelled the German's doubts. The inexpensiveness of Harry's neat clothes and his deferential bearing had given this Rhenish Junker pause; but suddenly he remembered that simplicity of dress and manner was the vogue among the younger English aristocracy and he resolved to go on with the project he had formed an hour before.

At the end of half-an-hour's dialogue in English and German, Harry understood what was asked of him. This new acquaintance, the Freiherr von Ehrenwald-Bendelheim, was anxious to arrange a race-meeting on English lines. The long flat strath was a splendid racecourse. Two hundred and fifty thalers would be given by the Freiherr as prize-money. Was Harry able to stay in the neighborhood a week or so longer, and to direct the whole affair?

Coggin's first impulse was to beg off and to get out of the village at once. But a fierce desire, helped by the Schloss Johannisberger, to be busy somehow, suddenly shriveled up both his Puritanism and his pettiness. After all, why should he not do this? Much of his life had been spent among ostlers and other horsey people; and, although he had only



seen Bulford Races as one of the plebs, his prehensile wits and retentive memory had made him understand racing as if to the manner born. Of course in 1864 there was no handicapping; and most race-meetings were on simple lines. So Harry filled his own and the Freiherr's glasses once more and boldly said "Yes."

The days which followed were a long delight to Harry and a season of pride for the Freiherr. The fame of the pale black-haired young Englishman, who invariably swam a kilometer in the Moselle before sitting down to eat a breakfast for three, flew along the valley. The *Anzeige* of every little town published tempting paragraphs about the forthcoming races. Everybody except Harry knew that the meeting was being got up to spite a certain upstart Baron—*neugebacken*, or new-baked, the Freiherr dubbed him—who had lately arranged an ostentatious gala regardless of expense; and this lent a keener piquancy to the event.

Just above the narrow end of the strath, the conformation of the hill-side was so suitable for a grand stand that Nature seemed to have had the Freiherr's race-day in view for thousands of years. The course presented many difficulties, but Harry was equal to them all. He often amazed the gentry by throwing off his coat and showing the rustic carpenters what to do and how to do it. This caused uneasiness until the Freiherr explained that he had seen in England a certain young Count Cecil, belonging to the most ancient nobility, who had washed his own shirt and baked his own bread in the Australian gold-diggings. On hearing that the Freiherr had said this, the village schoolmaster turned up an old magazine article about racing in England and it soon began to be whispered about that the Freiherr's young English friend was a near relative of the hochwohlgeboren Lords Derby and Epsom who owned all the most famous English race-horses.

There were only three races on the card: but, according to

the custom of the time, each race was run in three heats, thus giving a good afternoon's racing. The question of two-year-olds did not arise, as nobody had any in training. The Freiherr's two hundred and fifty thalers, which were worth less than forty pounds in English money, sufficed to provide prizes of a hundred thalers each for the two open races while the remaining fifty purchased a respectable little silver goblet for the Officers' Cup.

The great afternoon came and went. For the Freiherr it was a resounding triumph. As for Harry, the *Anzeige* declared that he was covered with glory; and so said everybody. Had he not so grouped what seemed to be the hopelessly ill-assorted competitors in the short-distance race that the final heat was the most exciting struggle of the day? Had he not, when riding himself in the long-distance race, carried the Freiherr's English mare Dark Dollie to easy victory, running clean away from everything and everybody? Above all, when the blacksmith's idiot son fell into the river, had not the Englishman plunged instantly to the rescue and saved the queer little life?

While the country folk buzzed round him after he had put on dry clothes, Harry himself did not feel conceited. He had fished too many people out of canals and rivers to grow excited over one more or less. Nor was there much to boast of in his winning the long-distance event against such a field. Indeed, Coggin had formed a poor opinion of the Germans as horsemasters; and he thought that even the officers had small ground for feeling proud of their mounts. What pleased him most was that the people had enjoyed themselves and that the Freiherr was more than satisfied.

Somebody bawled a command and the crowd fell back, revealing an elderly stranger whose importance was proved by the fact that the officers themselves made way for him. Harry,

who had been partially instructed by the Freiherr in German modes of address, thought he heard some one say the words *wirklicher Geheimrath*, meaning Veritable Privy-Councilor. The great man hulked forward and drew Harry on one side.

"I am glad to make your lordship's acquaintance," he began, addressing Harry in English which would have been good if he had been able to pronounce *b* and *g* and *th*. "Freiherr von Ehrenwald has told me about you. I wish more Englishmen would travel in Shermamy and learn Sherman."

"I speak German very badly, Excellency," said Harry. And he was about to explain that he was not a lord when the stranger interrupted him with a blunt question about the war with Denmark. Why had so many Englishmen gone mad in favor of the Danes? "Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales is very pewtiful," he said, "but there is no Danish plud in her veins." He went on to declare that the people of Schleswig-Holstein would be far happier under Prussian rule and with German culture. Then he praised Lord Palmerston for recognizing hard facts. What would have happened, he asked, if England had fought Prussia on Denmark's behalf? "Unless France and Austria and Switzerland and Pelgium and Holland and Russia had joined you, your wonderful navy could not have plockaded Prussia, and you had not an army to fight us on lant."

Harry, who had followed the short course of the Prussian-Danish war with great eagerness up to his leaving England, but had not seen a report of the speech made by Lord Palmerston only a week before, respectfully began to make comment, but the great man again cut him short and poured out a long harangue in praise of a certain Herr von Bismarek. He finished by saying: "It is good that you travel in Shermamy. Go pack to England and tell your compatriots that our two countries must be always friends. Who is your protection

against Russia? It is Prussia. What watches France, your old enemy? It is Prussia. We are cousins, of the same plud. Schleswig-Holstein will soon be contented with the change, like your Scotland and your Wales."

"We have also Ireland and the Fenians," objected Coggin. But at that moment the Freiherr joined them; and close on his heels pushed two beaming, well-groomed young Englishmen, entirely lacking reverence for the divinity which hedges a wirklicher Geheimrat.

"Look here, I say," blurted out the first young Englishman. "Who the devil are you?"

"Yes," cried the second, "that 's what we want to know. We heard about your races at Coblenz. We were sick of the beastly Rhine and the beastly steamer so we cut along here. The beastly steamer stuck near Cochem—not enough water—and we could n't get anything except a beastly diligence, full of fleas."

The word "beastly" was only just establishing itself in the English language; and Harry had never heard it used save in its dictionary sense. Before he could think of any answer to make, the second Englishman fired another volley of questions, with "beastly" in every one of them.

"I wish your lordship goot evening," said the Veritable Privy-Councilor, deeply offended. And he went away with the Freiherr, leaving Harry still tongue-tied.

"There!" chuckled the first Englishman. "We 've picked up the scent. He 's a lord."

"I 'm not a lord," retorted Harry, becoming exasperated. And after the two young men, who were evidently very keen sportsmen, had mentioned Eton and Harrow, Oxford and Cambridge, and had pressed him beyond endurance, he suddenly snapped out: "I 'm a poor man's son. I only went to school for a fortnight. I 've never seen Oxford or Cambridge in my life."



"Fiddlesticks," said the elder.

"Gammon," said the younger. And after a pause, he asked: "Then what's your name? I suppose you'll say it's William Smith or John Jones."

"My name is Coggin," Harry answered.

"Exactly," laughed the younger. "So they told us at the beastly inn. That's what excites our curiosity. Of course we twigged it at once."

"I don't understand," said Harry uneasily. "Twigged what?"

"Why, the name Coggin of course. We're not fools, or as blind as bats. Come, come, your lorship. Coggin . . . or In-cog . . . we've got it, now haven't we?"

Harry stood thunderstruck at this undreamt-of but plausible theory. While still speaking, the younger Englishman had been rapidly scribbling with a pencil. He held up a card and Harry read:

COGGIN  
INCOG

"My name is Coggin, Henry Coggin, and nothing else," said Harry desperately. "It's the only name I ever had."

"Hang it all, don't be so beastly unsociable," said his cross-examiner. "Your race-meeting was stunning and we're proud of you. I'll tell you who we are ourselves. Just turn over the card. My name's Brasher—Sir Richard Brasher. I hunt the Digg county, y' know. My friend is Mr. Coppington, the Honorable Everard Coppington, Lord Knott's only son—Lord Knott of the Jockey Club, y' know. You've told these beastly German fellows who you are, and I'm sure you'll tell us too."

Harry retreated, in dismay and utter bewilderment.

"Of course, if you have reasons for secrecy, we have enough delicacy to respect them," put in Mr. Coppington. "But I

hope you will pardon the liberty if I make a single observation. Unless I am greatly mistaken you are Lord Sarrow of Sarrowden. Everybody knows that Lord Sarrow has been roving incog. about the Continent ever since he came into the title. If I 'm right, let me assure your lordship that nobody speaks ill of your father any more. The affair was explained, the cloud lifted; and you would return to find nothing but welcomes and kindness."

"This is all a ridiculous mistake," cried Harry, in consternation. And, as they shrugged their shoulders in good-humored incredulity, he added wildly: "If you want to know the truth, my father dealt in rags and bones."

"And your grandfather was Burke, the poisoner," said Sir Richard Brasher. "And your mother took in washing. And your great-uncle was a tripe-dresser, And your twin-brother is an undertaker's mute, with a red nose. Very well, Lord Sarrow; if you haven't the grace to reciprocate what was merely the friendly act of two fellow-countrymen you can jolly well take yourself to Coventry. We are spending the night here—at the other inn, not yours—and if you are ashamed of yourself by the morning you can come and say so. All I 've got to say is that it was a damned good afternoon's racing; and you can go to the devil."

## CHAPTER VI

**I**F Henry Coggin had been a charlatan and an adventurer he would have found it easy to deepen the mystery which had begun to enshroud him and to reap a rich harvest of pleasures and profits. He had read more than one novel wherein shady Englishmen had found Germany a happy hunting-ground: but, as he was simply an honest and modest man, he felt no itch to copy these flashy humbugs of romance.

The Freiherr had invited Harry to dine that evening at the Schloss, three miles away, with a numerous party. What was to be done? The Veritable Privy-Councilor would certainly be there; and perhaps Sir Richard Brasher and the Honorable Everard Coppington as well. Harry promptly decided on flight. Returning to the inn he wrote a very polite letter to the Freiherr, explaining that he was suddenly forced to go away. He made a respectful suggestion concerning Dark Dollie's prize-money and enclosed a hundred thalers with the request that a two-kilometer race should be run annually under the odd name of "The Bay Rum Cup."

Having swallowed a hasty meal and paid the reckoning at his inn, Harry bespoke the services of a lad to carry his luggage over the hill to the nearest steamboat-pier. The Moselle made one of her great bends at that point, and many miles could be saved by climbing the narrow neck of the promontory and catching the steamer on the other side. When nearly all the people were engrossed in rustic merry-makings on the strath, Harry and his porter stole almost unheeded out of the village and up through the vineyards. But as soon as the summit was reached, Harry stopped and said in German:

"Here are twenty silbergroschen. Give me my rucksack.

If I do not return here before the church clock strikes eight, you may go back home."

The rucksack or pouch was not very heavy; for most of the traveler's baggage had been left in a gasthaus at Oberwesel, on the Rhine. Abandoning his intention of catching the steamer Harry went forward at a great pace until the by-road steepened and began winding up to the table-land of the Hohe-Eifel. He gained a good and fairly level road at a height of perhaps seven or eight hundred feet above the Moselle; and there a cart, coming from the east, overtook him and gave him a lift and a rest for a couple of hours. When the carter had to turn aside into a by-lane, he gave his strange passenger full directions concerning an inn, not far away: but Harry preferred to tramp on through the cool dusk, under the tranquil stars—the self-same stars that had often beamed down pitifully upon him during his grievous paces to and fro in Yellowhammer Lane.

The nights were at their shortest; and soon the half-dark made room for a glorious dawn and a flaming sunrise. Just as the wayfarer's strength was failing, his instinct told him that he was near water. The road dipped and he found himself close to a hurrying stream gurgling against a dark cliff which supported a broken castle. Five minutes later he was splashing in a crystal pool; and straightway Sir Richard and the Honorable Everard lost their terrors, like nightmares when the night is past.

Harry rambled about the Eifel for a week, tramping nearly thirty miles a day. The highland air did him good. No whistle of steamboat or of railway-engine broke the mountain's ancient peace. As the high roads were made of basaltic lava, harder than a marble pavement, which grew fearfully hot under the July sun, he cut across the grain of the country, by field-paths and mere wheel-tracks; yet he generally contrived



to walk at dinner-time or at supper-time into some white-washed inn where there were eggs and trout, hams and fowls, cheese and conserves, as well as young, sharp thirst-quenching wine.

Rising above meadows as luxuriant as any in the rich vale of the Deme, Harry came, again and again, upon strange long-cold volcanoes. In one old crater he watched men cutting peat; in another haymakers were busy; while the third and fourth held deep and silent lakes. To go up-hill instead of down to find a lake was odd. It seemed like going upstairs to a wine-cellar. But the climb merely served to heighten the delight of a plunge into those pure and mysterious waters, nestling like soft blue birds in Vulcan's forsaken forges.

One day, Harry sat basking in the sun after a long swim in the circular Pulvermaar, a crater-lake of about a hundred acres, set in pine-woods. He was turning over with his toes the large-grained black volcanic sand which formed the beach, when he heard wheels on the lava road a furlong away. He grabbed his clothes and sought shelter.

Hardly was the bather's toilet finished when a German, rather absurdly dressed as if for feats of mountaineering in the Dolomites, pushed slowly through the trees to the edge of the water. He seemed to have come in quest of something which he could not find, and his disappointment was so great that Harry felt bound to step forward with an offer of help.

"Good!" cried the stranger. And, speaking a little English, mixed with much German, he explained that Harry was the very gentleman he was seeking; that he had read, two days previously, an account of the races in a Trier newspaper; that, only an hour before, in the inn at Gillenfeld, he had heard that a young Englishman answering to Harry's description was in the neighborhood; and that he had posted at once to the lake, where he felt sure of finding him. Finally, he insisted on

giving Harry a seat in his carriage, as they were both going to Monreal, in the Eltzthal, twenty miles away.

Fortunately for Harry, the stranger was one of those numerous Germans who preferred talking to listening. His favorite phrase seemed to be "was halten Sie?" meaning "what is your opinion?", but he never waited for the opinion to be given. The young Englishman was beginning to feel the strain of listening to a polyglot discourse in a ramshackle carriage when an unexpected question was put to him. Did he know the Domprobst Carl Kingsley?

Coggin had often heard of a clergyman named Charles Kingsley but he could not fathom the meaning of Domprobst. Luckily a German word for "author" came to his mind; so he asked if this Charles Kingsley happened to be a schriftsteller

Yes. It was the same. The German had "two times read 'Vestvard Ho!'" Good. Well, in this very country, this self-same Volcanic Eifel through which they were trundling, Harry's new acquaintance had met the Herr Pastor Kingsley and had helped to get him out of prison.

"Prison?" echoed Harry, in blank astonishment.

"Yes. Prison." Herr Kingsley had been mistaken for a spy or an assassin. His collection of bits of basalt and tufa and other geological specimens, hidden in old socks, had been mistaken for an incendiary's stock-in-trade and the reverend schriftsteller had been flung into gaol.

"But do not too much blame us," added the German, after narrating his own part in the affair at great length. "You say this would not have happened in England. It remains to know. In my father's lifetime, our Fatherland was invaded by the French. They pillaged our cities, they ruined our churches. Some day we must fight the French. Then Germany will be once more united and will become rich and great

—as great and rich as your England. And I beg you, mein Herr, to remember that we are at war even now. It is a little war, this war with Denmark: but we could not be sure that the Emperor Napoleon, and even you English too, would not join the Danes against us. No, no. Here in Germany we cannot take risks. Our police must know who are the strangers who come among us.”

In speaking thus, the deliverer of Charles Kingsley was merely boasting of a good deed and airing his opinions, and he had not the faintest suspicion that any mystery had recently grown up around this young Englishman who sat facing him on the opposite seat of the carriage. Harry Coggin, however, took it for granted that trouble was in the air. What was he to do? How could he prove that the name of Coggin was not a play on *incog*? A cloud seemed to have come over the sun. Why was it that misunderstandings followed him whithersoever he went?

Although the German immediately turned the talk first to Mexico and then to Louis Napoleon’s policy in the Papal States, Harry was not fully reassured. He insisted on paying for the rough mittagsmahl which they ate in a poor inn at the foot of the Wolfsberg; but when Monreal was reached, he gave his companion the slip, and without staying to see the two castles, just caught the diligence to Niedermendig, whence he could easily regain the busy Rhine.

In one of his tattered books Harry, when still a little boy, had read a marvelous account of the beer-cellars at Niedermendig—those miles of galleries, sixty feet underground, quarried by the Romans in the solid lava. After visiting the caverns by torch-light and after tasting the famous beer, the fugitive again recovered his common sense. Provided he took care never again to get out of his social depth, who could harm him? His passport and his letters of credit were in order. All the same he thanked Heaven that Edward Redding had

not arrived on the scene, by some terrible chance, at the moment when he was being taken for a lord; for Heaven alone knew what immeasurable prank would have followed.

It was Harry's practice to pay his hotel-bills over-night, so that he could take the road at cock-crow. He left Nierdermendig while the roses of dawn were still unfolding in the eastern sky. After an hour of brisk going he caught sight of the noble Laacher See, or Lake of Laach, just as the sun cleared the hill-top on the further side of the water.

For many days the traveler had longed for this moment; and the fruition was even better than his hopes. The crater-tarns of the Eifel were only "maare," or meres; but this was a "See," like the Sea of Galilee, with stubby little blue waves clop-clopping on the foam-flecked beach. Round the lake rose five extinct volcanoes, some wooded, some bare; and to the left stood the glorious old church of Our Lady of Laach with a dome and five towers.

As it was so early, Harry decided to tramp round the lake, a circuit of about five miles, and to reach the church in time for Mass. He had accomplished half the journey when he met, coming down from the village of Wassenach, a boy with so honest a face that Harry felt he could trust him. The lad readily promised to look after the Englishman's clothes: and soon Harry Coggin was reveling in the deep water.

A mad idea came to the bather. This was to be his last experience of the volcanic lakes. On the morrow he would probably find nothing better for his morning splash than a German bedroom basin, about as big as a soup-plate. Why should he not swim right across the lake?

Having shouted new orders to the admiring farm-boy, Harry struck out. If he had realized that he had two miles to go he would have resisted the temptation: but the roofs of the abbey-church, wet with the night's heavy dew and flash-



ing like a jeweled reliquary in the slanting beams of the sun, seemed less than a thousand yards away. Never troubling to husband his forces, off he went, lunging at the pretty crests of the bobbing waves and sporting like a porpoise.

Suddenly he knew that he was tired and that it would be prudent to swim ashore at once. He glanced to the left. There was the boy, trotting along with Harry's clothes and rucksack: but the left bank was as far away as the church at the end of the lake. He turned to the right; but the right bank seemed the most distant of all. Then he understood that he had reached the very middle of the See and that he, who had saved so many others from watery graves, was himself in grave peril of drowning. The cold clear water enfeebled him and refused to buoy him up. He gave a shout, which echoed mockingly among the dead volcanoes; but nobody heard it save the trotting and trusting little boy on the froth-strewn shore.

Keeping a level head despite the hopelessness of his task, Harry settled down to work. He employed every device he had ever tried or heard of for economizing strength but this false and lispig water seemed to be his enemy, eager to suck him down and to gloat over his bones forever. In despair, he cried aloud once more. This time the lad on the beach understood. Harry saw him drop clothes and hat, stick and rucksack, and then watched him racing like a wild colt towards the abbey, until trees and bushes hid him from sight.

Harry was alone. In his gray life he had been called to endure many an hour of bitter solitude, but never such a moment as this. The strong young arms, the tough young legs, the stout young heart could hold out no more. Death by drowning had never terrified him in he past. Indeed it had even appealed to his cleanly nature as something wholesome and tranquil and sweet. Yet, in this fearful moment, he

wilted with horror; because he remembered that the deep-down bed of this pitiless lake, with its long-drowned rocks which no mortal eye had even seen, was not a bit of England but a bit of Germany; and his quailing spirit cried out desperately for home, for home.

From one of the five towers a silvery bell slowly began tossing out small clear sounds, like polished pebbles into the lake. A moment afterwards the excited boy and a tall man in black came rushing towards the water. Harry laughed bitterly. What could they do? Not a boat was to be seen. It was too late. The swimmer closed his eyes . . .

A great splash, as if a giant had taken a header from the top of one of the towers, brought Harry back to himself. The boy was gesticulating on the beach: but where was the man in black? He had vanished. No . . . what was that black knob floating on the wavelets? In a flash, Harry guessed what had happened. A powerful swimmer was urging forward to the rescue. The knowledge gave him not only new hope but new strength. Instantly the water seemed less deathly cold and he struck out briskly once more. Very soon he perceived that he had swum better than he knew and that barely a quarter of a mile separated him from safety. Then the spurt died down; and hope would have died with it if a great hearty voice had not bawled out in English:

“Never say die! I ’m coming!”

Harry had worked his way so near to the western shore that he was now sheltered from the wind, and the See lay calmly around him. His deliverer’s words, which had been shouted along the surface of the water, sounded in Harry’s ears as if they had been spoken only fifty yards away. If he had known that there was still a furlong of struggle before him, he would have collapsed and gone under; but he did not know and he battled on. His legs had ceased to serve him. All he could do was to clutch at the water and jerk himself forward; even

as a soldier whose legs have been shot away grasps with desperate hands the tufts of grass before him and tugs himself, faint and bleeding, up a fire-swept slope towards some ditch or thicket.

"I'll race you home," cried the hearty voice.

A giant, with hair blacker than Harry's own, was alongside him, near enough to dash to the rescue if he should be wanted. The challenge not only drove into Harry's ears but seemed to rush through his veins and along his marrow, like a warm elixir of life. The danger was over now; and instead of choking and sinking down to rot in the dregs of a deep German lake, he was within arm's length of a jovial Englishman.

The race began. From the age of seven Harry had been so marvelous a swimmer that no competitor had ever kept up with him. Only a year before, he had easily out-paced a famous professional in an early-morning swim in the river Deme. And so, at the word "off" roared by the black-headed man, Harry drove forward mightily, determined to win. But his rescuer, quickly discerning how the matter stood, cunningly pretended to be a poor swimmer and very nervous, until they were both paddling along as gently as two young ladies.

Coggin's feet struck something hard. He stopped, and found himself stumbling on a submerged pavement of smooth lava. His rival was less lucky and fell floundering, from the edge of the shelf-like rock, back into deep water. Harry shoved on till the pavement ceased and then with a score of exultant strokes, gained the furthest beach and fell full length on the warm stones.

When Harry came to himself, he saw that his rucksack had been shoved like a pillow under his head, while a bulky black coat had been swathed round his body. As he opened his

eyes, somebody raised him up gently and pressed to his lips a cordial. Harry drank it eagerly. It seemed to be old brandy, sweetened a little with honey and strongly tintured with mint and other herbs. He stared in front of him. Close at hand was the blue-eyed boy from Wassenach. Beyond stretched the round blue lake; and the scene was closed by the dead volcanoes. But whose was this great arm supporting his head and whose this black cloak?

"*Mortuus erat et revixit,*" murmured a big but gentle voice, close in Coggin's ear. "*Deo gratias.*"

Both the sound and the sense startled Coggin. Latin! Somebody was talking his beloved Latin. In Latin, somebody had said "He was dead and is alive again. Thanks be to God." Harry wrenched himself free and looked behind. There on the stones sat the giant who had plunged into the See to help him: a black-haired, clear-skinned, superb giant, wearing nothing save a coarse shirt and breeches.

"Good!" the Titan cried. "If you 're well enough to jump like that, I can take back my habit. Thanks. I'll rub you down with this rough towel. I found it in your bag."

Feeling horribly shaky, Harry dressed himself with difficulty. From time to time he was aware of a vast but nimble hand softly pushing aside his own numbed fingers and fastening for him some buckle or button. When his teeth had ceased chattering he turned to thank his benefactor and beheld, with fresh amazement, the towering figure of a monk, in a black habit. On a boulder somebody had set out neatly the provisions from Harry's rucksack—half a white loaf, two hard-boiled eggs, some thin slices of black rye-bread, and a large pat of butter. To this repast there had been added a smoking little brown pipkin, a bottle and a black flagon.

"Try to eat," said the monk. "You 've to thank this clever boy of yours for the soup and wine and for the drop of Benedictine. While we were both in the water he rushed up to



the abbey and brought this good stuff back with him. Drink this. It's red wine—Assmanshäuser, more warming and generous than the white. Here's a spoon for the soup."

"You are going to eat too?" said Harry. "There seems plenty for all three of us."

"No. I can't. You see, I haven't said my Mass yet. I happened to be walking by the lake, saying my Office, when this good kid of yours butted right into me and told me there was a gentleman drowning. I suppose you can spare him a slice of bread-and-butter and one of these eggs and a sip of wine? But don't talk. Stuff yourself. Guzzle. You need it."

Harry could not have talked if he had tried. In his omnivorous reading he had come across a good deal about monks and had studied an illustrated History of Costume so thoroughly that he easily identified the giant as a son of St. Benedict. But, having never before seen one in the flesh, he had taken it for granted that monks must be either red-nosed, paunchy gluttons and tipplers, roaring with laughter over some merry story and emptying straw-covered wine-flasks, or emaciated fanatics principally occupied in digging their own graves. The Hercules before him was certainly a genuine monk: for had he not just spoken of saying his Mass and his Office? Yet he seemed as jolly as Mr. Huntly-Martin or Sir Richard Brasher or the Honorable Everard Coppington, as well as a good deal more happy than all the three put together. Harry had heard that monks hated cold water: yet this monk swam like a fish. Strangest fact of all, he talked slang, such as "stuff" and "guzzle."

"When you've finished, let Hans or Gottlieb, or Fritz or Karl bring everything up to the abbey," said the Benedictine. "You must rest an hour or two with us."

Comforted by the warm sunshine and the good meal, Harry once more felt that he had his wits about him. He thanked

the monk fervently, and then added: "Excuse me, sir, but I have read in a guide-book that the Benedictine Abbey of Maria-Laach was suppressed in 1802 and that there are no monks left."

"Quite so," the other answered. "But let us be thankful that the French revolutionary armies spared this beautiful church, seeing that they wrought such frightful destruction elsewhere. They destroyed some cathedrals utterly, such as Bruges and Boulogne and Arras; and they knocked down one Rhineland cathedral at auction for less than a hundred pounds, to be carted away as building materials. It is true that the Benedictines are at Laach no longer: but you will find kind hosts and a welcome. You see, the Jesuits have bought the place and they took it over only a few months ago, for a school. There is a big turning-out and clearing-up going on. You see that I am a Benedictine? Well, I happen to be interested in music—not exactly waltzes and polkas, you know—and I've come here to see whether anything in my line happens to have been hidden away. Hallo! Half-past six. My Mass. Be sure to come and have a cup of coffee with me at half-past seven."

## CHAPTER VII

**H**ENRY COGGIN approached the Abbey of Laach timidly, intending to rest there for three hours. He stayed three weeks. On first hearing from the big Benedictine that he was to be the guest of Jesuits, even for one short summer morning, Harry had felt alarmed. Jesuits, as he imagined them, were inscrutable, sinister, velvet-footed beings, who had never been young and never grew old. While he was too well informed to believe all he had heard against them, Harry would nevertheless have preferred to slink away: for how could he be sure that his absurd triumphs at the races had not reached this Abbey in some exaggerated version? Gratitude, however, compelled him to accept the invitation to a cup of coffee: so he faced the ordeal and found it pure delight.

Although the pupils of the new school were not in residence, the monastery seemed full of life. Most of the Jesuits, of course, were Germans: but among them worked a Spaniard, two Irishmen, a Brazilian and even a Russian. After the first strangeness had worn away, Harry felt marvelously at home with these men. In many respects he had recaptured the atmosphere of his beloved house in far-off Bulford. There were the same habits of early rising, of hardness, of long-sustained industry, of order, of cleanliness: the same keen enjoyment of one good meal a day: the same relish for brief recreation after long labor: the same background of books and pictures and—thanks to the Benedictine—even of music. Although he immediately made it known that he was not a Catholic, nobody argued with him about religion. As the

Jesuit Fathers read their breviaries in private instead of singing the Divine Office in choir, there were no high functions in the superb twelfth-century church: but Harry invariably assisted at the Mass celebrated by his friend the Benedictine, and he spent at least an hour of every day in the cool and silent Romanesque nave, looking up into the dome or at the Roman monoliths, quarried a thousand years before the foundations of the church were laid.

After his cup of coffee with the monk, on his first morning at Laach, and while he was still fully determined to be on the road again within an hour or two, Harry Coggin was taken round the monastery. At several points he noticed heaps of discarded odds and ends, ready to be burned or given away. His twelve years' experience of upholstering and cabinet-making and china-riveting could not be suppressed; so he very modestly offered a few suggestions for turning some of the lumber to good account. In the end, joiners were summoned from Coblenz and Harry found himself that night established in a monk's cell. He had always pictured a cell as a tiny vaulted chamber, hid behind cold walls of enormous thickness and furnished with a skull and some ponderous volumes: but his cell at Laach was a large and cheerful room overlooking the blue waters of the sunlit lake. A crucifix hung on the wall and the few engravings all depicted religious scenes. Otherwise the cell was furnished pretty much after the manner of his own plain bedroom at Bulford.

Days grew to weeks. Never in his life before had Harry been continuously so happy. Foot-rule in hand, he went everywhere, planning and contriving; and there was never a day when he did not also put in a few hours' good work with saw and plane and hammer. Under the Benedictine's guidance he broke his way into a new province of music—plainchant and the polyphonic masterpieces of the sixteenth century. He acquired the unfamiliar notation and tonalities with



surprising quickness and was soon able to help his master by copying MSS. and by jotting down the discrepancies between them. Unfortunately the good Jesuits were neither musicians nor antiquaries: and therefore Coggin's acquaintance with plain-chant was all on paper while he was at Maria-Laach.

When August began and he could not for shame linger at the Abbey any longer, Harry resolutely wore down the protests of his kind hosts and fixed the next morning for departure. A plan for requiting the hospitality he had received occurred to him. Despite his fertility of suggestion, there still remained a medley of objects of which no decorous use could be made by the Fathers. There were two gilded Cupids from an eighteenth-century altar; several old pictures, especially mythological subjects and portraits of long-dead burgesses; stamped leather; ancient locks and keys; pewter vessels, discolored and distorted; moldings, knobs, a huge hour-glass; and even a few pieces of once grandiose furniture.

Remembering that Edward Redding had asked for some old German things, Harry respectfully offered to purchase a selection of this cast-away stuff for one hundred and fifty thalers, or about twenty guineas of English money. The Superior, after vainly entreating his guest to take away the goods as a present, at last reluctantly accepted one hundred thalers. But Harry had hardly discharged one obligation when he was entangled in another. The Fathers presented him with a bursting wallet containing letters of introduction and commendation to abbeys and others religious houses all over Germany and Austria.

Quitting Laach at dawn and halting for a night at Oberwesel where his larger luggage had been stored, Harry steamed far up the Rhine, past the Cat and the Lorelei and the Mouse-Tower, through Bingen and Mayence and Worms, to Mannheim. He held fast, however, to the promise he had given Edward Redding and did not sleep in any of the big towns.

Passing southward he entered the Black Forest just as the August heats were becoming unbearable.

At Baden-Baden, his heart in his mouth, Coggin made so bold as to present himself, with an introduction which he had obtained, at the house of Clara Schumann in the Lichtenthal: but the famous lady was away, having fled from the crowd of gamblers and bathers to some quiet spot in the Forest. Harry did not presume to track her down: but he too hated the extravagant and restless life of Baden-Baden so heartily that he turned his face to the mountains.

At the end of August the traveler reckoned that during his eleven weeks in Germany he had walked fully a thousand miles along river valleys and through pine-forests and over mountains. He perfected a contrivance for binding to his left wrist a small dictionary from which he memorized words and phrases as he trudged along. Every day he made a point of paying some educated native to read and speak with him until his command of German idiom and pronunciation enabled him to talk easily and to listen confidently. In the village inns there were always tourists with whom to converse: and on the roads he often became a fellow-tramp with German students making walking-tours in loquacious parties.

Coggin had begun to cherish an affectionate reverence for German scholars: because he had already met some noble specimens of the class. They had impressed him as poor, carelessly dressed, uncouth of manners, absent-minded, unpractical; yet they were redeemed by humble wisdom and transfigured by noble idealism. And so, whenever he ran against a party of students, in shabby clothes, walking barefoot to save their boots, he took it for granted that such dusty striplings were necessarily the worthy successors of those old scholars who preferred to pass the dog-days drinking cool store-beer in Heidelberg and Bonn. Little by little, however, he began to perceive that a change was coming over Germany. Even al-

lowing for the carnality of youth, the youngsters were evidently more materialistic, more arrogant than the oldsters. As Edward Redding had foretold, they stuck to Harry like leeches, always taking care to air their English and never letting him practise his German. Yet they nursed against England jealous hatred which they hardly attempted to conceal.

One noontide, as he was resting beside the little lake called the Titisee, Harry suddenly felt the good air shut away from him by the big bodies of half a dozen broad-backed young Germans who surrounded him, all talking at once. They had heard in the village that an Englishman, after climbing the Feldberg, was gone to the Titisee; and they simply made him a present of their company for the rest of the day. At first Coggin could not feel much displeased, although he had wished to explore the mountains alone. The youths had good voices and they sang some difficult part-songs in a delightful manner as they walked along. Probably they could not have shown a hundred thalers if they had emptied all their six purses on the table together; and Harry could not help comparing them favorably with a young Englishman he had encountered in Baden-Baden, who confessed to having spent and gambled away fifteen hundred thalers in less than a week.

One of the party, an open-faced, likable young man, was called the Worm; which sounded unjust till Harry remembered that this German word meant "Dragon." The Worm and another youth, nicknamed the Love-sick Lion, chatted with Coggin very pleasantly about the Black Forest and their adventures in it. At last, however, they were shoved out of the conversation by a blond, weak-eyed person, dubbed the Crocodile, who was better dressed than his companions. The Crocodile disdained mere travel-talk and began putting questions about academic life in England. He demanded to know whether it was true, as he had lately read, that the students at Oxford and Cambridge spent most of their time rowing

boat-races and whether the young men at the University of Exeter know nothing of Greek, preferring to go out with small dogs to kill rats.

When the Englishman gently explained that there was no University of Exeter, but that there was a college of that name at Oxford, the Crocodile showed great annoyance. He was accustomed to be regarded as infallible. In his chagrin, he went off into an unmannerly and violent attack upon the English universities. All the world knew, he declared, that they had long ceased to be seats of learning. He could not deny that they turned out sportsmen and athletes: because, only a few weeks before, he had read in a newspaper how a young English nobleman had swum the Laacher See.

"It is wider than Leander's Hellespont and much colder," said the Lovesick Lion, "and there was no beautiful maiden at the window to encourage him."

"That may be," snapped the Crocodile. "But we German youths use our strength more nobly. With the oar and the crickey-batz we may be inferior: but we do not, like the English, neglect the career of arms. We can use the sword. I have read that the duel is now almost unknown in England. Truly, I cannot understand. If I should insult you, worthy Herr Englishman, what would you do?"

"I should knock you down," answered Coggin simply.

The Worm and the Lion saved the Crocodile's honor by laughing boisterously; and then a bilious-looking student called the Yellow Fox, with great tact, reminded the Crocodile that they had been discussing the academic life. Turning to Coggin he explained in a reverential tone that the Crocodile was writing a thesis to be called "The Influence of Onomatopœia on the Development of Classical Meters." Thus encouraged, the Crocodile plunged noisily into a swamp of erudition, in which he splashed about with great delight. Suddenly he interrupted himself and demanded Coggin's opinion.



"I think," said Coggin, "that we should be sparing in our use of this long word. You have described many passages as onomatopœic where I think there is nothing more than the verbal propriety which we expect in poetry. Many words, in all languages, are in themselves mimetic or descriptive and the poets used these words because there were no others. As for what you said about the Eupolideus Polyschematistus, you will not deny that Eupolis was a sophisticated comic poet, And will you excuse my saying that your example of the Phalaecian hendecasyllable is not an example of that meter at all? The dactyl is not preceded by an ithyphallicus."

Horror struck the Worm, the Lion, the Fox, and the other students dumb. By a common instinct they came to a halt in the midst of the pine-wood. The Crocodile, the learned Crocodile to whom they owed money without exception, had been flatly contradicted by a healthy young English barbarian, not on a point of horse-racing or fox-hunting but on the Crocodile's very own subject, on the matter of the Crocodile's very own thesis. With one accord they turned to the Crocodile, dumbly imploring him to save Germany's honor as well as his own.

"I am glad to discover," said the exasperated savant, "that there are, after all, some young Englishmen who concern themselves with the classics. But with great respect I say you are wrong. If we were in a town instead of a pine-wood, and if these tree-trunks were the shelves of a library, I would at once convince you of your mistake."

Coggin shook his head good-humoredly but confidently. "Let us talk of something else," he suggested. "Or, better still, let me hear another of your songs."

They were singing the last bars of a doleful madrigal about home-sickness, when the path curved sharply and dipped steeply, revealing a large plain building in the midst of newly-

made gardens. From a laborer standing at the gate the Yellow Fox learned that this was a Jesuit college, recently opened.

"There will be a library inside," said Harry. "I am sure they will allow us to consult it."

"I hate the Jesuits," retorted the Crocodile, "and I will not be under an obligation to them."

The Worm, with unwormlike spirit, replied that they must think of the inmates of the building not as Jesuits but as scholars; and he led the way through the gate. A fairly good library was willingly opened and Coggin proved that the Crocodile was wrong.

"We all make slips sometimes," he said generously.

"You may. But I don't," shouted the Crocodile, in a terrible rage. And to Coggin's utter stupefaction, he denied having said that his quotation was intended as an example of the Phalaecian hendecasyllable. What was still more appalling, the Yellow Fox and two of his toadies, Schwarz and Beckmann, instantly and loudly agreed that the Crocodile had made no such statement. On being challenged by the Fox, with a meaning leer, the Love-sick Lion hummed and hawed and at last affirmed that he could not clearly remember. Only the Worm dared to take the Englishman's side.

Before departing in disgust, Coggin politely thanked the Jesuit who had opened the library: whereupon the good Father said:

"Pardon me. We meet so few Englishmen who speak good German that I must ask you a question. Is it possible that you are the young gentleman who stayed three weeks in our new school at Maria-Laach? One of our Fathers received a letter about it. Perhaps you are the Englishman who swam the Laacher See. If so, you are indeed doubly welcome here."

"It was I who stayed at Maria-Laach," Harry confessed modestly. "And I shall never forget the kindness of the

Fathers there. Allow me to accompany these . . . to go with my traveling companions a little way further: then I will return and pay my great respects."

He had begun to say "these gentlemen"; but the word stuck in his throat. And when they were all seven out again on the road he drew back from the others, attaching himself to the Worm alone. In the village, less than a mile off, he led the party to the best inn and ordered a four-bottle "bowl." Two hours before, the Crocodile had given everybody a draught of wine and Harry was not willing to remain in his debt.

When the bowl had been emptied, mainly by the prowess of Beckmann and Schwarz, Harry, ignoring a dozen eager questions about the Laacher See, rose and said:

"In my country we often use the expression 'a scholar and a gentleman.' I perceive that, with the exception of the Worm, whose hand I shall be proud to shake, you students are neither. If anybody considers himself insulted, let him challenge me now. The choice of weapons will be mine, and I shall choose the only weapons I carry with me—my two fists. But let me warn you that I have used them before and that I was not the vanquished. Herr Worm, I admire you: not for taking my part, but for speaking the truth without flattery and without fear."

He went out slowly and loitered in the road. Through the open window he saw the Crocodile making a big pretense of struggling away from the restraining grasp of his parasites and he heard angry exclamations. But the Crocodile failed to follow him: and even the Worm did not turn.

## CHAPTER VIII

A FLAW in a letter of credit cut short Harry Coggin's wanderings in the Black Forest and compelled his return to Cologne without even a glance at Freiburg. The weather too was breaking and a visit to an English tailor had become imperative.

Fogs delayed the steamboat and it was very late when Harry stepped ashore at Cologne. He could not see the towers and spires: but he knew that they were all around him, climbing here and there into the dark, because the chilly night was a-hum and a-throb with the mutterings of a hundred muffled bells. The grandeur of these solemn peals and the hush of the narrow streets impressed Harry deeply. He thought at first that the King of Prussia must be dead: but a friendly citizen told him the truth. Cardinal von Geissel, Archbishop of Cologne, had just breathed his last. The shops were shuttered, the cafés and theaters closed. Cologne seemed a city of the dead; and when the tired traveler blew out his bedside candle the muffled bells were still crooning in the autumn gloom.

Very early next morning Harry made his way to the Cathedral. He drew near with a faster-beating heart. Excepting the huge whitewashed barns of Holland, he had never in his life beheld a church on the grand scale. Nevertheless, as he mounted the steps, he sturdily reminded himself of what Edward Redding had said and he prepared himself for a great disappointment. In at least half a dozen books of travel he had read the same jokes about eau de Cologne and about the city's forty distinct smells, together with the same protestations of disillusionment at the interior of the cathedral.



He entered the church when the sunshine, paled by ghostly vapors from the Rhine, was pouring an unearthly light through the eastern windows. Harry could have cried out in fear and amazement. He was standing in a temple so vast that it seemed more like a wonder of nature than a work of art. So large a part of the earth was here enclosed that shadows hid the roof a hundred and fifty feet above Harry's head while light veils of mist blurred the High Altar, more than half a furlong away. The pile was as solid and solemn as a limestone cavern, yet as lissom and airy as a larch-wood in spring.

Harry perceived what had happened. Since Edward Redding's visit, since the printing of even the latest guide-books to Cologne, the authorities had pulled down the partition wall which for five hundred years had divided the choir from the nave. He, Harry Coggin, was beholding what Edward Redding had never beheld and what the grumblers who wrote the travel-books had not been able to imagine. He was gazing down the whole length of a Dom which had been six centuries a-building.

As the light grew, the vast house came to life. Bells began tolling, out of sight. Every five minutes or so a priest, vested for Mass, would pick his way through the forest of columns, attended by a surpliced boy, and take possession of one of the countless altars. Hundreds of the townfolks came dribbling in, some in punctilious black, some in smocks or aprons with market baskets or the tools of their trade. Some remained for half an hour, hearing Mass: some knelt low and prayed before a great Crucifix or before the image of a saint; and some, after bowing down and crossing themselves, hurried back to their toil and their worries.

As Harry, with lingering steps, quitted the cathedral he noticed a burly cleric instructing a band of carpenters and he guessed that arrangements were already being made for the lying-in-state of the dead Cardinal. Passing out into the

streets he found them more animated than the night before: yet half-masted flags, black shutters and scarves of crape were everywhere. He walked rapidly westward, intending to visit the tomb of Duns Scotus in the church of the Minorites before breakfast; but in this church also black-vested priests were already saying Masses for the repose of the Archbishop's poor soul: The same dread business was toward in the astounding church of St. Gereon, with the sarcophagi and the skulls of the three hundred and eighteen martyrs of the Theban legion; in the old Irish church of St. Martin: in the cruciform shrine of St. Maria in Capitol; in St. George's and in St. Peter's, in St. Severin's and in St. Cecilia's, in St. Cunibert's and in St. Pantaleon's; in the domed basilica of the Apostles; and also in the church of the sainted English princess Ursula, so that Coggin could not decently linger over the bones of the eleven thousand virgins.

Throughout that soft September day, Harry almost lived in churches. In the cathedral alone he spent two or three hours, watching the erection of the catafalque, marveling at the tall yellow candles and drinking in the poignant, ancient chants and the resounding Latin. And even when he was in the street he could not feel that he was quite out of church: because, all the time, half-hushed peals of near bells seemed to shelter him from common sights and sounds with a moving canopy of sable velvet borne on poles of massy bronze.

By every train and steamboat, ecclesiastical personages were arriving in Cologne. Dignitaries drove hither and thither in chariots. Praying nuns abounded in the churches. Representatives of religious orders, in their picturesque and varied habits, were always passing in and out of the Dom. Nor was military pomp to seek. Brass-bound generals and other high officers in resplendent uniforms rode noisily along the cobbled streets. At Harry's inn the landlord asked him to mount two floors higher, to make room for some enormous,

short-necked, loud-speaking civilians who had come from Berlin. It began to be evident that an outsider and an Englishman, like Henry Coggin, stood a poor chance of gaining admittance to the supreme ceremonies.

Among the letters of introduction in his pocket-book, Harry knew that there was one addressed to a Prior in this very city of Cologne, but bashfulness held him back from using it. It fell out, however, that his good friend, the Superior at St. Maria-Laach, accompanied by the big English Benedictine monk, had just come downstream from Andernach to assist at the funeral. Harry was in the south transept of the cathedral, gazing at the colossal statue of St. Christopher, when their two hearty voices hailed him.

Business soon hurried the Jesuit away but the Benedictine was free. He had taken a strong fancy to Harry, and he appeared to be more conscious of their common nationality than of their difference in religion. During the hours which followed, his influence unlocked two libraries of rare books and MSS. and four church-treasuries of vestments and reliquaries. He pointed out a hundred things not mentioned in the guide-books, and rapidly narrated the legends of saints as set forth in the carvings and paintings and windows of the churches. He showed—though Harry knew some of these things already—how one could distinguish by their dress a Franciscan from a Dominican, a Benedictine from a Carmelite, and he briefly explained not only the origin but the practical condition of these great orders. He stepped into a shop and bought for his friend a prayer-book in Latin and German; and when the old shop-woman insisted on selling Harry a rosary this good-natured monk took him into a quiet little church and taught him how to number the beads, how to say “Ave, Maria,” and how to meditate on the Mysteries of Redemption.

They ate their midday meal at the hospitable table of the Jesuit Fathers, where grief for the dead Archbishop was al-

ready beginning to be lightened by speculations as to his successor. After dinner, the Benedictine led Harry into the Jesuits' church and, standing before the over-decorated pulpit, exclaimed:

"I detest Jesuit architecture, Jesuit decoration. The Jesuits have aimed at grandeur and have achieved only grandiosity. Yet their intention was sincere as well as grandiose. Remember that when this church was built, in the seventeenth century, the kings and nobles of Christendom were busy piling up vast and ornate palaces, often to the neglect of churches. Think how mean is the cathedral at Versailles in comparison with the Grand Monarch's over-grown house, half a mile away. The Jesuits were determined that Almighty God should have His due: that He too should have new enormous halls rich with gold and marble. But give me instead the solemn interiors of the Romanesque, the yearning arches of the Gothic. You have seen St. Gereon's?"

"Yes. I have seen nearly twenty churches here," replied Coggin.

"Then try to imagine what Cologne was, until about sixty years ago. There are old men in this town who remember the day when Cologne boasted more than a hundred churches. Think what an Archbishop's funeral must have been in those days. The cannon. The muffled peals from fifty belfries. No gas lamps; all candles. No steamboats, no railways. The river alive with row-boats, with sailing-craft; the streets blocked with coaches, with travelers on horse-back. Still, the sights we are seeing to-day are imposing enough. But listen. Those bells, just beginning overhead, were cast with metal of captured cannon."

Out in the street, Harry returned to the question of the hundred churches and observed: "I suppose the people of Cologne don't want a lot of little churches now that their immense cathedral is nearly finished."



They were passing through a public garden. The Benedictine stopped dead, as if dumb struck. Then his tongue was loosened and he poured out a stream of simple eloquence which swept away Harry's preconceptions and overwhelmed him with new ideas.

A cathedral, the monk declared, was not a magnified parish church. It was an august shelter for the seat of the Bishop, the successor of the Apostles, where he sat throned in the midst of his Chapter, teaching and ruling the faithful. It was a stately palace of the Incarnate Redeemer, truly present on the Altar. It was a temple where Almighty God was praised with lofty praises seven times a day. Whether ten thousand people crowded in, or whether the vast nave was empty, made no difference to this high work of praising God—a work as needful to be done as the work of baking bread, the work of carrying water, the works of spinning, of weaving, of tanning, of fishing, of plowing, of sowing, of reaping.

They resumed their walk until the Dom came in sight. "Look!" cried the monk. "Here in stone and in wood and in glass is your whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Carved or painted, inside or outside, you find Paradise; the Deluge; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the patriarchs, the judges, the prophets, the kings, the apostles, the martyrs. And here is the future as well as the past. Here are the Day of Judgment, Heaven, Purgatory, Hell. Here are the gracious miracles of beloved saints, so plain that an unlettered child can read them."

He set forth the other uses and meanings of a cathedral, and then added abruptly: "But surely, even in your Church of England, the cathedrals, our old cathedrals, have taught you nearly all that I have just tried to say."

Coggin hesitated. On the one hand he hated to speak about himself: and, on the other, he hated still more to remain in a false position. At length he said:

"I never saw a cathedral in England. I lived in the same little town all my life until three months ago and I had to work very hard. As for my being a member of the Church of England . . . well, I suppose I am. I was brought up a Baptist. When I was twelve years old, I was baptized by a Church of England clergyman; but he became a Roman Catholic a few weeks later. I have never been confirmed and I have never been to Holy Communion."

The astounding monk relieved himself by a long low whistle. He gazed at the half-made Anglican so fixedly that Coggin became alarmed and began to feel sure that a stern reproach, full of *odium theologicum*, was preparing behind that knitted brow. But when the Benedictine spoke it was not in fulminant Latin or even in academic English. He said:

"Here's a rummy go. Never heard anything like it in my life. Now look here, my young friend, I'm going to talk to you like a Dutch uncle. At Laach I swam out to save you from the water. This afternoon I shall speak out to save you from the fire—from hell-fire. Do you understand?"

"Yes," retorted Harry, stung by the words. "You mean that only Catholics can go to Heaven. You mean that all those who are not Catholics must go to hell."

"I mean no such rubbish, no such heresy, no such blasphemy," said the monk warmly. "I wish I could feel as sure of getting to heaven as I'm sure that my old aunt Charlotte will go there. She hates the very name of the Pope and she gives half her income to the Irish Protestant missions: yet in her own way she is a saint. She is not against the Church but only against a silly and wicked travesty of it which bigots have steadily held before her eyes. She does not deny the Catholic faith, but only a vile perversion of it which she does right to abhor. No, no. I fear some Catholics will go to hell and I believe many Protestants will go to heaven."

"You mean, perhaps," suggested Harry, when the monk's

pause had lasted some time, "that in my case I can't plead ignorance; that if I don't turn Catholic I shall be wilfully shutting my eyes."

"Not exactly," said the other. "What you have just said is obvious. My thoughts are traveling quicker and further than that. I'm pretty sure you'll become a Catholic sooner or later. What troubles me is that you may come into the Church for the loaves and fishes. No, no, don't jump, don't get angry. Let's go into the cathedral and I'll explain."

Within the holy place the monk said: "There are many kinds of loaves, many kinds of fishes: loaves that never came out of an oven, fishes that never swam in the sea. We despise those who hang round the Church simply for what they can get. But think. You have money. If you had n't, you could n't spend all these months gadding about Germany. So a loaf of baker's bread would n't tempt you to profess piety, as it tempts a poor hungry widow. Yet . . . yet I am afraid that some day you may turn Catholic for your particular loaf, for your particular fish. Music, Architecture, Vestments, Images, Ceremonies, Latin. To you are not these things crisp, crusty, golden rolls, are n't they tasty little silver fishes?

"My dear friend, mark me well. The Church is a city set on a hill, a city fair to behold. Her gates, her walls, her towers, her gardens, her palaces, her banners make a brave show. Music murmurs and resounds in her streets like rushing water-brooks. Her fountains run wine. But while you are thankful for these delights, while they refresh you and strengthen you, it is not for these pleasures that you must climb the path to her gateway. You must knock humbly at her portals simply because Almighty God has appointed this City for your soul's habitation. Even if her many mansions were mud-hovels, if her streets were choked with nettles and thorns, if her fountains poured forth bitter waters, if her

fig-trees bristled with thistles, her true citizens would abide just as trustfully, just as thankfully within her walls.

“Look up. Look round. How glorious are these roofs, these columns, these marbles, these windows, these rolling chants. Yet they are man’s work, fated to decay. If a hundred immensely wealthy rascals pooled a hundred ill-gotten fortunes together they could build a copy of this cathedral, just as vast, just as solid; they could put into it a grander organ, they could hire sweeter choristers, more sonorous cantors. But they could n’t buy the Presence of God. And if, on the other hand, the Catholics of Cologne were driven out of this cathedral, driven out of St. Gereon’s and all the other churches, driven into dank caves or crazy barns, with not one chasuble, with no chalice save an earthenware cup, without bell or candle, without one statue of a saint, without one painting, without one relic, without even a crucifix, they would still be Catholics. Their priests in everyday clothes would still be priests, their caverns and sheds would be Catholic churches, their Mass, with a boulder for an altar, would be as truly the Holy Sacrifice as the High Mass sung by the Pope himself in St. Peter’s on Easter Day.

“I entreat you, when the moment comes for your choice, to ask yourself searchingly whether it is the Master Himself you are choosing or merely the Master’s golden loaves, the Master’s silver fishes.

“Glance at that lady standing under the statue of St. Apollinaris. Look at the cross hanging round her neck. It sparkles with gems. Christ’s cross, with the passing of eighteen hundred years, has become encrusted all over with jewels—the spoils of His conquests in the fields of art and poesy and music. But I repeat, when the hour of choice comes, demand of yourself whether you are desiring the diamonds or rubies rather than the little hard cross underneath, the cross



which was once a symbol of utmost shame and must always be a symbol of self-renunciation, of griefs, or sorrows. Do you understand me?"

"Yes," said Harry, rather feebly. "I have always heard that one of the great mistakes of the Catholic Church is to intoxicate the senses by mysterious architecture and wonderful music, so that the soul does not worship God in spirit and in truth."

"There are no such things as mistakes of the Catholic Church, my friend," retorted the monk, smiling, "but I know what you mean. That Puritan heresy is not new to me, because I was bred and born in it myself. It hates the breaking of the alabaster box of precious ointment over the head of Our Lord. Church windows must be of leaden gray; harsh voices, with no organs to mollify them, must lead the divine praises: the sacred ministers must go about their high business in the coats and trousers of the counting-room; lest thoughts should wander away from the Puritan's unsmiling, unhomely far-off God.

"I grant that there may be dangers to some souls in a stately ritual. Some people might argue that these obsequies of Cologne's dead Archbishop are so interesting that they blunt the sharp sense of death and that therefore the remains of Cardinal von Geissel should be thrown into the ground like a dog's. We do not rob the dead of seemingly rites because some musical mourner may speculate as to the pitch of the passing-bell instead of preparing for his own last hour. And we must not rob God of the honors which are His due, merely to pamper a few spiritual muffs by removing danger from their path instead of teaching them how to overcome it. Believe me. If there are indeed men and women who are made to forget God by the majesty of a *Te Deum* sung in a cathedral, those men and women would never have been led to find Him by a Tate-and-Brady metrical psalm bawled in a conventicle like a barn.

No, no. Let us rejoice that the King of Kings has noble palaces, that He is acclaimed in them with brave fanfares. All I pray is that the King Himself may be your soul's desire. There are too many converts nowadays who approach the Church with a condescending air, graciously signifying their approval of her art, her music, her philosophy. They give up nothing. They merely pluck for themselves the roses of religion, with gloves on their white hands against the thorns. Be on your guard against this subtle hedonism. Do not patronize the church. Enter her courts humbly, thankfully, obediently, generously, more anxious to serve and to suffer than to attain complacency and to increase your sum of fine pleasures."

A Domschweizer or verger approached to say that workmen required possession of the spot whereon the two were standing. As they moved off, an old priest claimed the Benedictine and bore him away.

Harry went down to the bank of the Rhine and crossed by the bridge-of-boats to Deutz, whence he could gaze on the towers and the peaked roofs of Cologne. The monk's earnest harangue had been based on a complete misunderstanding of his auditor's character and history: yet it made Harry think.

"Do not patronize the Catholic Church . . . do not come to her with a condescending air." As he leaned against the wall of the little harbor and watched the bridge-of-boats opening for the passage of a great raft, Harry could not hold back a joyless laugh.

He recalled the very few landmarks in his short and limping religious progress. Even Pastor Clupp's tiny chapel and bleak services had commanded the boy's humble reverence. As for the Church of England, it had been only by a tremendous effort that he had screwed up courage, twelve years before, to beg of the Reverend Oswald Redding the supreme

privilege of baptism in the cool waters of the hurrying Skilbourne. Until the death of his father, he had continued to sit under the sermons of Pastor Clupp except on days when his relations with Mr. Daplyn, the organist of St. Michael's, enabled him to worship at the parish church. But, as Mr. Redding's successor knew nothing of the lad's baptism and was determined in any event to give him a wide berth, nobody mentioned Confirmation: and Harry did not presume to approach the holy table. In the eyes of Bulford's church-people, young Coggin was simply a chapel-going boy whose itch for organ-playing did not entitle them to interfere with his paternal religion.

While he was shrinking thus timidly from claiming his privileges in the Established Church, it would have required a miracle to make Harry dream of ever entering the Church of Rome. That Mr. Redding, his hero and his ideal, had become a Catholic made no difference. Although the boy occasionally perused a theological book in the course of his omnivorous reading, he had no strong theological bent, and his ecclesiastical knowledge was neither systematic nor up-to-date. When he thought of Mr. Redding's Catholicism he never identified it with the faith and practice of the shabby and gloomy little Catholic chapel where Bulford's poor and often tipsy Irish knelt in unpicturesque rags before a tawdry altar. And even if he had realized that the Bulford Catholics were in full communion with Mr. Redding's magnificent Catholics in Rome and Vienna, in Paris and Rheims and Lyons and Chartres, in Toledo and Seville and Burgos and Braga, Harry Coggin would not have presumed to foist himself upon Mr. Redding's co-religionists. He would as soon have presumed to begin ordering his clothes from Mr. Redding's tailor.

The Rhine glared so hotly in the afternoon sunshine that Harry turned into a garden-café and ordered a glass of Rhine-wine in selterswasser. Over this thin and copious draught he

reviewed his Benedictine friend's exhortation once more. Pushing aside the inapplicable warning against condescension, he faced the monk's prophecy, "you'll be a Catholic some day."

It suddenly occurred to Harry that for exactly three months he had heard Mass every morning. This habit had formed itself without any deliberate intention. He had simply got into a way of hearing Mass, because the churches were always certain to be open in the early hours and because the old interiors always looked their best with candles burning on the altars, with vester priests celebrating the Holy Mysteries and with devotees kneeling here and there. Beginning, however, merely as an inquisitive tourist, Harry had gradually come to make this daily Mass-hearing a religious exercise. Morning by morning, he had filled the quiet half-hour with his own simple prayers and meditations, without once asking himself whither it all might lead.

Sipping his Rhine-wine, Coggin faced this new problem. Was he doing right? At Cologne and at Baden-Baden he had been within reach of Church of England services. Surely it was wrong for him, a Protestant, to attend no religious worship save the Romish Mass? And yet, when he tried to resolve that he would change his ways, a damp fell upon his soul and there, in the afternoon heat, he nearly shivered. No. This habit must stand. He could not give up hearing Mass. All the same, his native honesty cried aloud within him, demanding that he should make up his mind, one way or another.

To Harry Coggin the choice between Protestantism and Catholicism presented itself with a strange simplicity. He had heard many sermons at St. Michael's on the errors of the Church of Rome, but they had not greatly impressed him: because, in his earlier worshiping at the Baptist Chapel he had listened to equally solemn warnings against the errors of



the Church of England. Dogma and theological strife did not appeal to him: but he knew enough of such matters to enable him, as he sat gazing across the Rhine at the apse of the Cathedral, to catechize himself concerning Popish doctrine. Transubstantiation, Purgatory, the Apostolical Succession, the Immaculate Conception—although these articles of Romanist faith bristled with prickly polemics he knew that he could not confidently deny one of them. More. While he could not say boldly that he believed these dogmas, he felt that it would be harder still to disbelieve them, and hardest of all to believe their contradictories.

In the near past, one Papistical claim and one only had pained and repelled him—the claim that there was no salvation outside the Church's pale. This he had interpreted almost in its literal sense; and if the Benedictine had not, in homely fashion, brushed the misunderstanding away, it would have sufficed to keep Harry Coggin from giving a moment's practical attention to the summons of the Catholic Church. Unweakening loyalty to his mother would have made him scorn the thought of deserting her. How could he, on the Day of Judgment, have borne to turn his head from the steeps of light and to look down upon hell-bound goats with his own mother pushed onward and downward by the dark and unsavory herd, merely because of her unwitting heresy and inherited schism?

The solemn day came. From a privileged seat in the crowded Dom, Harry Coggin beheld the throng of cardinals, bishops, mitred abbots, monks, friars, nuns, princes, warriors, burgesses. He heard the stupendous hymn "Dies irae," he bowed with the kneeling thousands at the Elevation of the Host, he followed word by word the startling Latin of the Offertorium and of the five Absolutions, he watched the sprinkling and censuring of the bier. The mere ceremony out-

ran his expectations: but the ritual, the music, the vestments, the Latin, did not awe him so deeply as the Church's mien towards Death. In black raiment she sorrowed over mortality, over mutability: but there was no morbidness in her mourning. Her sable velvets heightened the brightness of Hope's silver star. To her children, sad-eyed Death was not a horror but God's pitiful and holy messenger.

What impressed Harry most was the calm faith of these Papists in the life everlasting and in the power of the living to help the dead. They could not lift the veil and accompany their friend and pastor into the strange realms beyond: but they could win for him supernal reinforcements to follow him through the ebon gate and to fight victoriously with him in the mysterious battle. They could pray the Father that He would send twelve legions of angels to be His servant's bodyguard against the Accuser and his demons.

When the clergy gathered round the catafalque and the choir sang *Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna, in die illa tremenda*: "Deliver me Lord from endless death in that tremendous day," Coggin hardly knowing what he did, began to pray for his own dead—for his father, for his mother, for George Placker's boys. But when all was over and the muffled drums of the military bands rolled out the first bars of a funeral march, Harry came to himself. The tension was ended and the vast congregation prepared to return to the common tasks of the city's life. But Harry made his way towards the great doors with pangs in his heart. What right had he to genuflect, like the real Catholics, to pause with bowed head before the Crucifix, to cross himself with holy water? How had he presumed, in this Catholic cathedral, to comport himself like one of the faithful and to pray for his Protestant dead?

Pushing across the sunny and now noisy Domhof he squared accounts at his inn and then hurried to the station. This

young man who had been warned forty-eight hours before against patronizing the Catholic Church had only one thought—how to escape from the magnificent scene of his presumption into some obscure and frugal valley where neither Freiherr nor Benedictine monk would make fantastic mistakes about his ignorance, his lowly birth, his wandering life, his friendliness, his aimlessness, his homelessness, his muddled religion, his fustian name.

## CHAPTER IX

ON the wooded mountains of the Odenwald and in waterside townlets of the upper Neckar, Henry Coggin passed the second half of September, tramping, climbing, swimming, studying. In dream-like weather he witnessed the beginning of the vintage, just outside a village near Neckarelz. Learning that the wines made thereabouts were of such little merit that they were all consumed locally, Harry betook himself to the Rheingau, fondly imagining that, as the wines of the Steinberg and the Johannisberg were immeasurably finer than the coarse juice of Neckarelz, so the Steinberg grape-gathering and the Johannisberg pressing must necessarily be far more interesting than the jovial, rough-and-ready vintage-doings of Neckarelz and its countryside.

Harsh and dusty fact soon withered this pleasant fancy. Rüdesheim and Geisenheim and Hattenheim, Rauenthal and the Marcobrunnen gave no welcome to the eager Englishman. Indeed, it would have been hard to picture anything much more unlike the vintage-time praised by poets and by painters. Where were the black-eyed olive-skinned maidens bearing laden baskets on their black coiffures with the dignity of caryatides? Where the lithe peasants, strumming beribboned guitars? Where the great vines clambering up giant trees or hanging in festoons from the rafters of moss-grown marble pergolas? Where the huge pendulous clusters, purple and amber, glowing like fabled gems in the green ceiling? Instead of these things there were hundreds of short-necked, grumbling boors perspiring amidst thousands of stunted currant-bushes stuck in dry and burning earth. When Harry



nervously asked a question or two he was eyed with so much suspicion that he suddenly felt a detestation of these baked slopes and parched hearts.

He turned eastward. At Eisenach he threaded a fairy ravine, in some places hardly a yard wide, until he reached the castle on the Wartburg, the throne of St. Elizabeth. The Minnesingers' Hall of Song had been made dreadfully spick-and-span by a restorer: but from Martin Luther's four-square chamber Harry looked down on the Thuringian forest in its autumn glory and felt that at least one of his dreams had come true.

Weimar and Gotha and Coburg did not detain him long: but at Jena Harry lingered two or three days, profiting by the erudition of a stumpy, kindly, ugly, wordy scholar from the University whom he chanced to meet in a beer-garden. From this wheezy fountain of knowledge Coggin quaffed some useful draught. He learned, for example, why there were so many petty princes and principedoms in Germany; and how, through delay in adopting the principle of primogeniture, the once great land of Saxony had been chipped into Saxe-Eisenach, Saxe-Weimar, Saxe-Coburg, Saxe-Gotha, Saxe-Altenburg, Saxe-Saalfeld, Saxe-Hildburghausen, and other Saxons too many to mention. He was told, further, that if it had not been for all this division and sub-division, Saxony and not Prussia would have become the leading German Kingdom. Over a pot of Pilsener which looked nearly as tall as himself, the scholar confided to Harry a political prophecy. Germany, he said, was bound to become a great and united Empire as a safeguard against the Emperor Louis Napoleon and his ambitious wife. In one sense this would be a glorious event, and the mere thought of it made every true German heart beat faster. But he feared it might bring immeasurable evils in its train; because the Prussians instead of the Saxons would usurp the hegemony and wield power. He

finished by drinking deeply to Harry as an Anglo-Saxon and by using an unacademic word to express what he would do if he met an Anglo-Prussian.

Resuming his journey, Harry hung reverently about Halle: for was it not the birthplace of Handel? In Dresden he spent only a few hours, because he chanced to learn, from a fellow visitor to the Sistine Madonna, that there was to be a specially interesting "Abendunterhaltung" that self-same Friday evening at Mendelssohn's famous Conservatoire in Leipsic. One of the few definite items in Harry's program was to visit Leipsic with a view to settling down there for twelve months under eminent masters of piano-playing and composition.

The Abendunterhaltung, a regular Friday fixture, was held in a bare-looking plastered room which became fearfully hot. Henry Coggin sweltered in the midst of lost illusions. Instead of breathing an ample atmosphere of manly art he seemed to be sharing scanty oxygen with schoolma'ams and favorite pupils. Many fine compositions were played under the frowns or beams of the Conservatoire professors who attended the Abendunterhaltung with portentous airs: but Harry's modesty did not suffice to suppress the feeling that he could teach as well as learn in this far-boasted institution.

Firmly believing that his unfortunate experience had been exceptional, he presented himself the next morning before the professors who had been most highly commended to him. They were patronizing and discouraging. Indeed they practically told him that his musical studies must begin over again. Harry's humility had returned to him and he might have entered his name meekly at the Conservatoire if it had not befallen that he strayed into a restaurant at mid-day which was the favorite eating-place of the more lively English students. These young people swarmed upon Harry like flies, all sucking him with questions at once about his musical past

and present. Happily for the victim they paid little heed to his few answers and many silences, because they wanted to do the chattering themselves. Like the boys he had met during his two bitter weeks at school, these youths spoke a language of their own, composed of slang, abbreviations, English words with German endings, German words chopped down into English, and innumerable cryptic nicknames and personal allusions. As their keen blades of satire flashed in the air, Harry shrank back into his solitariness and decided that Leipsic had been tried and found wanting so far as his musical plans were concerned. Had he been capable of self-analysis he might have perceived at that moment what Edward Redding meant by urging him to be young.

Tearing himself away from Leipsic's book-shops, Coggin moved on to Berlin. In 1864 the Prussian capital was a dull and provincial-looking town which he would have quitted at once if a certain event had not turned it into a city of enchantment. In Berlin Harry heard an *opera*.

It was the first time in his life that he had entered a theater. At Bulford-on-Deme the Baptists looked upon the dingy and stuffy Theater Royal as the headquarters-tent of the devil and Harry had unconsciously carried round Germany the feeling that "theater-going" was not for him. When, however, he saw *Der Freischütz* billed at the Opernhaus he forgot everything else in his excitement: and when, that same evening, the gas-lights were turned down and the curtain was drawn up, he felt that the proscenium was a great doorway or triumphal arch through which he was beholding a new world.

Many numbers in *Der Freischütz* were familiar to Harry. He had tried them on the piano and the organ and had even heard some of them performed by small bands in German parks and beer-gardens. But to hear them played by an opera-house orchestra and sung by first-rate singers as parts of a drama, against a warmly-painted and cunningly-lighted

scenic background, was a different thing. His experience of orchestras having been limited to military and other out-of-door bands, he was astounded by the full yet delicate passages given to the strings alone. The woodwind spoke with a subtle expressiveness which no organ could equal; and never until that night had Harry known the high majesty of drums and trumpets.

On regaining his hotel, the traveler once more perused the long letter of advice written four months earlier by Edward Redding and especially the paragraphs about opera-going. He had shrunk, in the first instance, from following these counsels and the matter had been made easier for him by the fact that in June, July and August, according to custom, all the German opera-houses were closed. During his brief stay in Cologne, the obsequies of Cardinal von Geissel had involved a stoppage of theatrical shows, as a matter of course. From Dresden he hurried to Leipsic without thinking of the Court theater; so that if Edward Redding had challenged him, Coggin could have truthfully answered that he had jumped at the first opera which came his way.

The next day Harry left his hotel and established himself in two bare rooms where he could enjoy the luxuries of a cold bath and a hot fire. The bath was a new oak tub, which he had to buy himself, but the fire burned in a Berliner kachelofen, fed by hard beechwood logs, of which his landlady was immensely proud. Rising with the raw October dawn, this odd young Englishman helped to carry his own bath-water upstairs (for in a majority of Berlin flats the water was not laid on) and, when his frosty ablutions were completed, he invariably strode off to hear Mass in the curious round church of St. Hedwig, near the King's palace. On wet days he sat near the cozy Berliner kachelofen, alternately poring over the full score of some opera which he had hired from a library or patiently adding to his already copious MS. dictionary of Ger-



man colloquialisms, proverbs and allusions. On fine mornings he did not return home for breakfast but went off to swim in the chilly Waldsee. His dinner, a hearty meal, was always eaten at noon in the German burgher fashion. And by twenty minutes past six he was taking his seat in the Opernhaus ready for the first bar of the overture.

After *Der Freischütz*, Harry heard Marschner's *Vampyr*, Lortzing's *Undine*, Cornelius' *Barbier von Bagdad*, and operas by Rossini and Verdi, Bellini and Donizetti, Auber and Meyerbeer and Spontini. He ventured to enquire when Schumann's *Genoveva* would be played and was smiled at for his pains. He was deeply interested in a version of *Faust* called *Marguerite* by a Frenchman named Gounod. But what roused his most lively expectations and gave him the most abundant and exquisite delight was a pair of legend-operas by the hotly-discussed Herr Richard Wagner. He thought the end of the second act of *Tannhäuser* was the best opera-music he had heard: yet, on the whole, he judged *Lohengrin* the finer work of the two.

It was while listening to the Grail-knight's recital in *Lohengrin* that an odd thought leapt into Harry's mind. What would Mr. Clupp say if he knew that he, Harry Coggin, sometime worshiper at Bulford-on-Deme Baptist Chapel, was beginning his day in a Popish church and ending it in an opera-house? No doubt the excellent pastor's scanty hair would have stood on end. Yet what were the facts as compared with Pastor Clupp's fancies? At Mass, Almighty God was worshiped, not only on Sundays but every day, with intense devotion. At the opera, every night some hero or heroine—and often both of them, with a squire and a tiring-maid thrown in—went ecstasically to death, singing high swan-songs in praise of fidelity, chastity, honor, loyalty and true love.

In *Don Giovanni* and in some other operas there were ballets

which would certainly have horrified Pastor Clupp: but the twirling white ladies did not perturb Henry Coggin's pure mind and, as the stolid and solid folk around him were as little upset as himself, the young man accepted these interludes merely as inevitable items in the traditional operatic program. As for the *prime donne*, or "goddesses" as they were styled by certain Italianizing elements in the audience, the gifted creatures were usually of such mature age and of such ample proportions that Harry's dreams were not tenderly haunted by remembrances of their grace and beauty. More than one, however, of these elephantine heroines was artist enough to become transfigured in the supreme moments of the opera; and thus it fell out that although Harry Coggin was never at the stage-door with a bouquet for a prima donna, yet the prima donna's tragic queenliness made the day-time maids and matrons of Berlin appear so insipid that Harry went on blissfully with his masses and his operas, his dinners and his dictionary, unhindered by even the slightest preoccupation with the feminine. He was working very hard, copying many pages from full scores before returning them to the library, and recording on the copy-book margins his impressions of different instrumental combinations. Furthermore, he had begun to plod at a grand opera of his own, to be called *Boadicea*.

Stern winter came on apace. Harry accepted an invitation from a musical family whom he had come to know at the Opernhaus, to visit them at Christmastide; but although he was fascinated by the charming old German customs of the season, he was blind to the coy glances of blue-eyed Gretel and the flaxen-haired Charlotte who were the belles of the Weihnachtsfest. He went home, without one twist of his heart-strings, to enrich his dictionary with an unfamiliar proverb he had heard at the supper-table and to jot down some suspensions for double-bass, double-bassoon and tuba which, during a

dismal solo on the piano by a black-browed young lady named Adelheid, had struck him as what he wanted for the prelude to *Boadicea's* second act.

The mammas of Charlotte and Gretel and Adelheid did not abandon hope. In their eyes this leisurely young Englishman was a wealthy dilettante worth winning. Throughout the New Year roysterings, Harry could have sat every night in some Berlin house or flat, eating herring-salad and smoked goose-breast and pfeffer-küchen, had not the counter-attraction of certain symphony-concerts and of some new works at the Opernhaus proved too strong. He accepted, however, an invitation to a wedding.

If the wisest man in Germany had been charged with the task of keeping Harry Coggin at a long arm's length from matrimonial fancies he could not have devised means more effective than the marriage of Ida Borchardt with Julius Rodenstock. Harry could understand elemental passion and he could believe in romantic love, although he had never known its power. But his clean and sterling spirit was revolted by the sickly philandering and mawkish gush which surcharged the atmosphere. The so-called lovers were not content merely to hold hands before their intimates. They kissed, they fawned, they cuddled under the admiring glances of Herr Papa and Frau Mamma. What sickened Harry most was the knowledge, which he had gathered from the tittering lips of Julius himself at a bachelor supper a night or two before, that the amorous Bräutigam had not the faintest intention of breaking certain arrangements by which he had been enlivening his loneliness for some years past. As for the Braut, although she was unable to name one young matron of her acquaintance who had not immediately become a mere hausfrau, she turned up her eyes and sighed over the doggerel poems which were recited in her honor as if she had been one of Parnassus' aery Muses gracing a banquet of nectar and am-

brosia instead of a ponderable young woman seated in the midst of Westphalian hams and Pilsener beer.

One January morning the week's lists of music came out with practically nothing in them save repetitions of operas and suites and symphonies which Harry had already heard. It was such a magnificent winter day—a hard frost, a clear sky, a windless air—that the traveler decided to move still further eastward, towards the frontier of Russia. He wished to see the five-naved Marienkirche in Danzig and to visit Königsberg, the old capital of Prussia.

A sudden change in the weather, followed by a heavy fall of snow, blocked the railway, and Harry left the train, late on a Thursday evening, at a small town in Pomerania. He was quickly established in a gasthaus which surprised him by its comforts. His enquiries had taught him that these eastern tracts of Prussia exceeded other parts in agricultural prosperity. The holdings were large, after the English fashion, thus giving the Junker proprietors an immense advantage over the small western yeomen whom Harry had pitied as he saw them wasting horse-power and man-power in the tillage of farms so absurdly divided that a holding of less than fifty acres was sometimes scattered over more than a hundred little patches, here, there, and everywhere.

The wine-list of the inn deepened this impression of opulence. Over and above the familiar growths of the Rheingau and its rivals, the cellars boasted several generous wines of Burgundy. Harry ordered a bottle of old Corton. The comfortable red juice made a welcome change from the white wines and light lager-beers which he had been drinking. The dining-room was well warmed by a porcelain stove; the soup was true soup and not merely hot water from the boiled beef: the veal, the chicken, the venison were succulent and well-dressed: the omelet blazed gaily with the lavish



aid of flavory Kirschwasser; and the coffee was innocent alike of dandelion-roots and of roasted acorns. Harry began to feel that Germany grew better the nearer he approached the rising sun.

During supper, a bluff and masterful German who had been informed by the landlord of the newcomer's nationality, struck up conversation in English, without troubling to ask whether his fellow-guest could speak German. Harry replied in English; partly because of his perennial modesty and partly because it was a real pleasure to hear his native tongue once more. The German's command of English grammar was feeble and his vocabulary was as meager as it was inexact; but this did not hinder him from explaining England's as well as Prussia's and Hanover's and Bavaria's and Austria's and France's and Sardinia's affairs to his meek auditor.

Very early the next morning, with no light to aid him save the pale sheen of the waning moon on the drifted snow, Harry stepped out of the silent inn and made his way along a bleak Bahnhofstrasse towards the center of the sleeping town. Arriving in the market-place he asked a watchman the way to the Catholic church. The watchman could hardly have been more astounded if he had been asked the whereabouts of the nearest Temple of Diana or the shortest cut to a Mohammedan mosque. He replied that there was no Catholic church.

Harry thanked him and turned away. The battered old moon had slunk behind a cloud. As he passed the end of a side-street which ran into the square a bitter wind nearly blinded him with a lash of icy flakes torn from a neighboring snow-drift. Hurrying on, he gained shelter under the huge lee of a church; but no ruddy lamp or starry candle twinkled through the big windows. The doors were shut, the gates were padlocked.

A gruff voice aroused Harry Coggin. The watchman had followed him.

“When does the church open?” Harry asked. For the sake of Latin and because he had come to understand the ceremonies, Harry had stuck to Catholic churches for his morning devotions ever since his first and ever-memorable experience of them in Amsterdam. But he still considered himself a Protestant and he once more began to blame himself for not having frequented a Lutheran church in Berlin instead of St. Hedwig’s. According to a book he had been reading, Lutheranism stood midway between Anglicanism and Romanism. When visiting Lutheran churches these last few months to examine their architecture, he had noticed crucifixes and confessional-boxes. The Lutheran Mass ought to be very interesting, although it would be in German and not in Latin.

“When does the church open?” echoed the watchman, beginning to be suspicious and angry. “You must be mad. To-day is only Friday. It opens on Sunday, of course; more than forty-eight hours from now.”

His tone and manner conveyed a hint which could not be disregarded. There was nothing for Harry to do but return to the inn where he found some slight comfort in perusing the Latin prayers and lessons which he knew were being enunciated, that very hour, at a thousand Catholic altars. None the less, his desire to attend a Lutheran service remained; and as the railway running northeastward was still blocked, he waited quietly for Sunday, alternately working at his dictionary of colloquialisms and ransacking the smaller shops for gay pottery and colored engravings and toys to be sent in due course to Edward Redding.

Sunday dawned—a beautiful day, with a return of hard frost and clear skies, and Harry duly went to church. The experience puzzled him even more than it disappointed him. Excepting two or three official-looking personages there was hardly a man in the congregation, and not very many women and children. He had heard that church-going was not the

strong point of Protestant Prussia, but this almost complete indifference of the population to public worship astounded him. Not that there was much in the service to attract the indifferent. Instead of Mass the Herr Pastor plodded through a routine so bare of churchly pomp and circumstance that even the rather "low" matins in Bulford parish church would have seemed stately and reverential in comparison. The atmosphere was that of Pastor Clupp's chapel, less the fervor.

Throughout the sermon, which was devoted to proving that the "so-called Gospel according to St. John" could not have been written until two generations after St. John's death, Harry Coggin glanced about the building. In every Catholic church, even the poorest, there was something to see—an altar or a window, a statue or a painting, a reliquary or a tapestry. Here there was nothing for the poor bored children to stare at while the preacher discoursed above their heads—nothing save one large Crucifix.

Before long, Harry had counted the pillars and windows till he knew them by heart, and he fixed his gaze upon the Figure. From childhood he had been blessed with such a lively faith in the historic truth and continuous reality of the Incarnation that, in moments of perplexity, he was wont to talk to his Divine Lord as if to some visible and tangible friend. On this January morning the nearly empty church was very cold; and, as Harry stood, strange thoughts came into his head and a strange trouble chilled his heart.

Morning after morning for seven months he had knelt face to face with a Crucifix. And in all his meditations on the Sacred Passion, he had thought of that almost nude Figure being scorched under an Eastern sun. He had thought of that distressful cry "I thirst," as a cry for cool water or for sharp vinegar. But suddenly, while the Lutheran pastor prosed on, he seemed to behold the stripped Body shivering in an arctic wind of unbelief, and he seemed to hear

an "I thirst" which was a cry for the warm and generous wine of human love. He remembered some Latin words which he had seen on many a Catholic altar cloth: *Deliciae meae esse cum filiis hominum*, "My delights are to be with the children of men." He remembered too many strange Catholic statues showing the Most Holy Redeemer pointing to His own heart, a heart laid bare and all on fire.

The mid-day meal was even better than usual: this being the principal Prussian homage to the Lord's Day. Over a roasted suckling-pig Harry ventured to ask his table-acquaintance, the broad-shouldered Pomeranian, to explain the town's apparent indifference to religion. The Pomeranian answered bluntly that Harry was now in the "enlightened" part of Germany where fanaticism and superstition had been long outgrown: that religion was all very well for children and women; and that he counted on seeing, within ten years, a Kulturkampf or layman's war against the Catholics. He declared that if the Jesuits were ousted from the Rhineland, Bavaria and Austria would soon follow suit.

The traveler went on to Danzig, to Königsberg, to Tilsit, visiting some fine buildings, eating some fine dinners, drinking some fine wine and hearing some fine music. But in all the churches, despite their architectural novelties, he was dismayed by the same spiritual desolation: and everywhere the Crucifix seemed to fix mournful eyes upon him and to murmur, *sustinui qui simul contristaretur et non fuit, consolantem me quaesivi et non inveni*: "I held on for some one to sorrow with me and there was no man: I sought for some one to comfort me and I found none."

Harry's was an acquisitive but not a ratiocinative brain. Beyond correcting misstatements of fact he rarely argued with anybody, not even with himself. While this applied to his mental life in general, it was especially marked in his re-



ligion. His prodigious memory retained a mass of theological formulae and of ecclesiastical history which many a divinity student would have envied: yet religion had been vital to him only when it transcended his intellect and moved mystically in his soul. But at Tilsit he began to think. The Protestants claimed to have snatched perishing Christianity just in time from the smothering corruption of Rome; and they spoke of the birth-time of their new religion as the "Reformation." Yet, after little more than three hundred years, Christianity was practically dead in Germany, its own cradle, or at least in those parts of Germany where Protestantism had had things all its own way. Harry had read many articles about a "Branch" theory of religion. He now understood what must be the fate of every branch separated from the parent tree, and this leafless, sapless Lutheranism reminded him of his Lord's own words about the withered branch, fit only to be cast into the fire and burned.

Not that he rushed to this conclusion. On the contrary he fought it away as long as he could. The end came one day in a Silesian hotel where two German officials overheard Coggin asking an English-speaking waiter the hours of the church services. Without troubling to find out whether the young Englishman understood German, the pair began a loud-mouthed conversation scorning the hypocritical and brainless English nation and openly deriding the Christian religion, especially the Catholic Church.

When the insulting duet had passed all bounds, Harry pushed back his chair, walked up to the offenders and said, in idiomatic German and with a perfect Hanoverian accent:

"As an Englishman, and as a Christian who respects the Catholic religion, I request that you will either discontinue this conversation or conduct it in a lower tone and in less insulting terms."

Leaving the two little great men speechless with surprise

and chagrin, Harry returned to his place, where he very slowly ate a walnut and finished his last glass of '56 Walporzheimer. Then, without haste, he left the room. In the hall, the English-speaking waiter, a Swiss, who had heard Harry's short speech, hurried him on one side and advised him to leave the town. It appeared that one of the officials was a personage who could give travelers a lot of trouble with their passports, by reason of the nearness of the Russian frontier. Harry Coggin, however, had already decided, some hours before, to leave Prussia and to visit Bavaria. There was an Opernhaus in Munich, and many famous pictures too.

In the train to Berlin, where he must needs pack his belongings, Harry's fellow-passengers were startled at hearing him laugh a short, unhappy laugh. It had suddenly occurred to this lonely youth that he, Harry Coggin, whom Edward Redding was determined to change into a German, had just been standing up for England; and that he, Henry Coggin, a Protestant and possibly a Baptist, had just thrown down a gage as champion of the Catholic Church.

## CHAPTER X

**A**T Munich in the eighteen-sixties the swarming artists took themselves very seriously. Art was spelt with such a large and curly capital A that cynical visitors from England and France indulged themselves in many a sly gibe at the miles of gaudy frescoes and the battalions of shivery statues. Harry Coggin, however, had not yet learned to be cynical. Although his travels had lasted eight months they had not effaced the harsh memories of his long years in Bulford when Art could be worshiped only fitfully and stealthily. To him this big town, where vast new buildings grew up before his very eyes and where new symphonies and operas were being composed by men whom he knew by sight in the cafés, was an Athens. Nay, it was something more and something better: because, over and above the artistic and courtly life of the Bavarian capital, there were the fast-ensuing wonders of the Roman Catholic calendar. Five-sixths of the citizens were Catholics; and, from the royal personages downwards, they gloried in adorning the great festivals of the Church with full military and civic honors.

As Holy Week in 1865 fell before mid-April, the solemn offices of Tenebrae were sung in a darkness made visible by dwindling tapers. Although Harry's expectations of Tenebrae had run high they were overpassed by the event. In this Munich, where, three hundred years before, Orlandus Lassus had lived and worked, the tradition of unaccompanied polyphonic music was not dead. Throughout Passiontide the organs and the noisy church-orchestras were hushed. Dust gathered on the exuberant scores of Haydn and Mozart and Schu-

bert; and the austere lovely tone-garlands of Palestrina and his peers were reverently twined about the solemn ceremonies. At Bulford-on-Deme there had been few reminders of Holy Week beyond the long gospels at Morning Prayer, the hot-cross buns on Good Friday and a few flowers (which some parishioners resented as a Popish innovation) in the chancel of St. Michael's on Easter Sunday. But in Munich one touching rite followed hard upon another.

On Palm Sunday, amidst the strange old Bavarian architecture of the Frauenkirche, Harry followed the great procession until he stood in the open air beneath the cupola-crowned towers and heard cantors within the church answering the choristers without, while the Archbishop of Munich-Freising and his court waited for the moment when the doors should be flung open and they should reënter the church singing a glad hymn, like the first Palm Sunday throng pouring into Jerusalem. He was present at the golden pomps of Maundy Thursday: at the Blessing of the Oils, the Procession, the Washing of Feet, the Stripping of the Altars. In deepest awe he heard the Reproaches on Good Friday morning while the doors of the empty tabernacle stood open wide: but his humility forbade him to join the black-coated citizens in adoring the Cross, and when they pressed forward to kiss a great ivory crucifix he slipped behind a pillar out of sight. On Holy Saturday he was among the first in the cathedral porch to see the smiting together of flint and steel and the lighting of the new fire. And on Easter Sunday, when Schubert and the drums and trumpets and fiddles and clarinets were in full blast once more, he felt as if a long night of noble sorrow had suddenly surrendered to a headlong, blinding dawn and that the Lord was risen indeed.

Lent being ended, the Opernhaus re-opened with *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Harry was making his way to the box-office when he was checked by a feeling almost of nausea. If the



piece had been *Lohengrin*, that chaste legend of the Knight of the Holy Grail set forth in music of unworldly strength and sweetness, he would have been eager to hear it once again. But from *Lucia di Lammermoor* he turned back. The stock operas, with their amours and intrigues and assassinations, their bombastic orchestration, their glib recitatives, their trashy vocal displays, had turned bitter and dusty in his mouth.

Spring called him; and he followed her for thirty miles across the heaths and through the forests and up the flower-clad hills until he lost her in the high mountains and stumbled against Winter, her white-bearded father, still gazing blankly at the glaciers and the virgin snow. After a perilous adventure he halted in Ulm to repair damages; and there a strange thing befell.

Again and again Harry had listened to rapturous descriptions of a new organ in Ulm which boasted a hundred stops and was the largest in Germany. With difficulty he obtained leave to try this vast machine. Its tone and touch did not wholly please him. On turning round at the end of half an hour he found he had an auditor, who proved to be no less than a retired Hofkapellmeister. After some compliments, the Hofkapellmeister asked for and was given the young Englishman's name.

"Coggin," he echoed. "Coggin. So? Perhaps it is a common name in England. Now, can you tell me anything about Henry Coggin, the composer?"

Harry started violently. As he had never breathed a word in Germany about his compositions it did not occur to him at first that "Henry Coggin, the composer" was none other than himself. He took it that he had a double—some cleverer and grander and happier Henry Coggin who could really write original music. Here was a fresh complication. But while he was standing aghast the Hofkapellmeister solved the riddle

by fumbling in a cupboard beside the organ and by producing a familiar volume. It was the ill-starred album of short pieces for the organ which Harry had published two years before.

If Pastor Clupp had suddenly bobbed up in the carved pulpit of this Ulm church—it claimed to be the biggest Protestant church in the world—and had given out Hymn Number Four Hundred and Twenty-nine, Harry could not have been more astonished. Observing his stupefaction the Hofkapellmeister explained.

“These pieces were given to me,” he said, “by one of your compatriots, a Herr Redding, whom I met with his family in the Schwarzwald. They had received them by post from the composer. I perceive that you are Herr Coggin and I am honored to make your acquaintance. I am proud to grasp the hand of the man who wrote this piece *alla capella* in C Minor. Whenever I play it, I seem to hear five voices executing some noble polyphonic motet of three hundred years ago. You did not write it to please the public. In some of your other pieces I find that you have bathed in the pure stream of Handel’s genius. We undervalue Handel in Germany to-day: perhaps, because he tried to turn Englishman. I am glad to see how deeply you have studied his organ concerti and his harpsichord pieces as well as his oratorios. When our poor Schubert met with Handel’s work he saw at once how deficient was his own musical equipment: but it was rather late.”

The old musician turned lovingly the well-worn pages, praising here and blaming there. At last he said:

“Your reverence for the great masters of counterpoint and fugue has delighted me. But I fear you have too much neglected your contemporaries. There is a *Zeitgeist*, a spirit of the age, which has its just claims upon us artists. Your compositions are too insular. I suppose you have come to Ger-

many to study. Are you one of the young Englishmen I hear about at Leipsic?"

In as few words as possible Harry narrated his Leipsic experience. But he did not add that he had hurried away from Mendelssohn's Conservatoire because of those very young Englishmen the Hofkapellmeister had mentioned. He explained that he was not absolutely dependent on music for a livelihood and that at the age of twenty-five he could not contemplate beginning to learn the pianoforte all over again. His tutors and professors, he added, were the conductors and singers and players at the opera-houses, the organists and choirs in the churches, the pianists and violinists and vocalists at the concerts.

"In Germany," answered the Hofkapellmeister, "that would not be the surest road to a career. No doubt England is different. I see you are a true Englishman. So keep your insularity and resist our German ideas. Go back to conduct *The Messiah* and Mendelssohn's English *Elijah* in the way your countrymen prefer and understand. You are shrewd. None the less, I see you are a talented and intelligent young man and I will do you a service. I will write you a letter of communication to my old friend Richard Wagner in Munich. He is a great man, a very great man: but in your country he is ignorantly attacked and misrepresented. His work must be preached, like a musical gospel. You will meet Herr Wagner at the most important moment of his career. Tell me which gasthaus you are staying in and I will send you the letter to-day."

When Harry returned to Bavaria with the precious letter in his pocket, he found Wagner's name in all the newspapers and on half the tongues of Munich. King Ludwig had ended the famous composer's long battle with poverty by granting him a seemly house and income and had bidden him realize

his magnificent project of operatic reform at the royal expense. Wagner had decided to begin with a festival performance of *Tristan und Isolde*, a work which had been discussed for years but never once presented on the stage.

Remembering the Ulm Hofkapellmeister's complaint about English irreverence towards Wagner, Harry Coggin was amazed at finding the Germans themselves busily trying to disable the creator of *Lohengrin* by a daily fusillade of calumny and insult. He was dubbed a dandy, a glutton, a voluptuary in whose extravagant and luxurious home even the Grand Turk would have felt quite at ease. He was accused alternately of republicanism and of an absolutist conspiracy with King Ludwig. It was hinted that in Saxony he had stealthily set fire both to an opera-house and a palace out of pure spite. As for his musical plans, he was roundly cursed as an interloper and a charlatan.

Harry's first modest visit to Wagner's house was brief: but it sufficed to sweep once for all from his mind the nonsense he had heard concerning an Arabian Palace of Delight. Everybody in and about the place seemed tremendously earnest and busy. The Meister did not appear: but, together with a polite excuse, he sent to his young visitor a card of admission to the Hauptprobe or full rehearsal of *Tristan* on the Friday following.

The Hauptprobe dispelled all doubts as to Wagner's meaning in calling his work a "festival" play. It recalled the feast-days of the Greeks, when Aeschylus and Sophocles and Euripides brought forth of their best and when song and dance were performed in a deeply religious spirit. Coggin found that *Tristan* had been expressly separated from the repertory of the royal opera-house and that the event was independent of the box-office. It was to be the herald of a musical revolution even more momentous than Monteverde's.

Before the auditorium lights were lowered a man of master-



ful appearance took possession of the conductor's desk. Was this Wagner? No. A student at Harry's elbow whispered that it was Hans von Bülow and that Richard Wagner had decided to witness the Hauptprobe from the dark depths of a box.

Harry knew already that in *Tristan* Wagner claimed to have taken a long musical stride forward from *Lohengrin*—a stride longer than the stride which divided *Lohengrin* from *Rienzi*. But what he heard was not a stride: it was the breadth of a world. Throughout four hours which might have been four minutes or might have been four hundred years he sat in thrall to the music.

While hearing *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* Harry had felt like a man being shown through a royal palace; admiring the state apartments, the furniture, the pictures, the statuary, in their order: pausing to glance through a window at the lakes and fountains and rose-brakes of the pleasaunce; bending a knee in the dim chapel; shuddering in the dungeons; climbing the steep spiral of the keep; and finally gazing down over the battlements at the whole wonder of roofs and courtyards, of moats and gardens, of bridges and towers. In these two operas, the fanfares, the processional marches, the serenades, the cavatinas, the duets, the choruses were artistically connected and contrasted; but they were "numbers" which gave the hearer a feeling that he was walking along a gallery and coming upon one fine thing after another.

*Tristan* was not so. With the first swellings of the prelude, Harry felt as if he were living with sharpened intellect and senses but without will-power in a cradle of bulrushes or in *Lohengrin's* faerie barque. The flood of mysterious melody deepened under him until he felt that he was afloat and drifting with the stream. He did not have to attend deliberately to the music: because the clamorous tide was below him and

around him, before him and behind him. The curtain rose and the current became more impetuous. It urged forward, bearing him on its breast. Sometimes it raced foamless and soundless between the dank cliffs of a sunless gorge. Once it chattered and danced through a garden, singing its glad way under cool arbors hung with trumpet-shaped, flame-colored, madly scented blossoms. Once it broadened into a torpid shallow, sagging wearily through withering sedge under a leaden sky. And in the end, after darkness had brooded over it and a storm had whipped its waters into fury, the river slid tranquilly into the sweetness of a dawn-reddened sea—a sea murmuring like a greenwood with all the birds of the world in its branches, a sea reflecting like a mirror the immeasurable and eternal heaven.

Thrown ashore at last from the healing depths of this blest ocean, Harry crept back to his lodging, like a man who has been snatched from drowning against his will. The vivid, solid men and women of Munich, chattering and hurrying, jostled him: but for Harry Coggin they did not exist. His ears were still filled with the shrilling of the west wind in the cordage of Sir Tristan's ship, with the murmurings of the cool leaves and the hidden waters in King Mark's garden, with the bumping of the Atlantic rollers against the castle-crowned cliff where Kurwenal and the young hind watched wearily for Queen Isolde.

Very late in the evening a faintness told Harry that he had forgotten his evening meal. A weinstube was at hand; so he descended the stone stairs and called for a round of black bread, a little cheese made of sour cream and a bocksbeutel of earthy Leistwein. French dainties served on fair white linen in a polite *salle-à-manger*, such as he had found in one of the Munich hotels, would have offended him at that moment; but the dim and massive crypt and coarse old-world fare of the weinstube prolonged his dream.

Two students at the next table aroused him. They were discussing and condemning *Tristan und Isolde*, on the ground that the libretto was all compact of pessimism and atheism. Coggin, who had still to learn that any stick was good enough to beat the luckless Wagner with, and that most of the champions who cried out against the atheism of *Tristan* were men who had not darkened a church door for years, was on the point of bursting out hotly in defense of the Meister: but his better judgment prevailed. As the students desired an audience they spoke loudly and Harry could not help hearing every word.

His ingrained habit of rendering full justice to every opponent asserted itself. These bitter youths were right. The text of *Tristan* left much to be desired, not only by devout Christians but by simple, ordinary, healthy human beings too. Its orientalism and Schopenhauerism, its poverty-struck doctrine of immortality, its revolt against the bright and eager daytime and its longing for night and darkness and nothingness were in themselves unwholesome, like strange vegetables forced in a tomb-like cellar. But as Harry Coggin drank his Leistwein he suddenly remembered that Wagner's poem was not meant to be taken by itself but as part of the whole music-drama.

It might be true—no, it was true beyond denial that Wagner the poet and philosopher was self-conscious, self-willed. Pessimism, atheism, hectic emotionalism suffused the poem without a doubt. And yet, with the music added, or rather with the music interpenetrating the poem in every line and every syllable, *Tristan und Isolde* became an exultant hymn of faith and hope and love. Even as the all-enveloping pity of God descends omnipotently upon poor mortals, despite their pride and ignorance and false philosophy, healing the sickness of their souls, bending their stiff wills and softening their parched hearts; so the music of *Tristan*, like a burning sun and a rush-

ing wind, tore clean alleys through the humid thickets, withering and uprooting the sickly-scented creepers and awakening the sweet, honest flowers of Spring. Like Balaam, Wagner the poet-philosopher had stood forth to curse life and longing; and, like Balaam, the musician Wagner had been constrained to chant over life and love high praises and rich blessings.

The students went away, the bocksbeutel ran dry, the kellner began to fidget with the lamps. Harry paid the score and sought the bank of the Iser. Watching the waters, he pursued to its end the thought which had come to him in the wine-cellar. Surely the conclusion could be none other than this. Wagner the writer was no more than a certainly gifted and possibly conceited man. But Wagner the composer was much more than a gifted and self-confident musician. As a musician, the Master was nothing less than inspired. That was why the musician overwhelmed the poet without the poet knowing it. The text of *Tristan* was like the spent and rent and blackened old seed which the gardener finds still clinging to the strong roots of a glorious flower. From that old seed the growth began: but, as St. Paul said, it had been cast into the earth to die. Harry recalled the words of *Tristan und Isolde* once more and understood how, at the call of the music, like the moldering dead at the archangel's trump, "this mortal had put on immortality, this corruption had put on incorruption."

In his bedroom, by the light of two candles, he scanned the MS. of his own *Boadicea*. The first act was complete as well as the pompously-scored overture. He read some of the dialogue and knew that it was not more stilted than the ordinary opera "book." He went through Boadicea's duet with the baritone which was accompanied by a seven-part chorus of priests and priestesses crooning softly in the neighboring temple and by a rich undersong of 'cellos, double-



basses and bassoons. But in every bar he saw, as if he had been gazing into a mirror, the reflection of an industrious, ambitious earnest, competent, resourceful plodder, plodding away at his desk because he itched to write an opera and not because he had an opera to write. In some scenes the music was imitated from Weber, from Spontini and from the *Tannhäuser* of Wagner. In other places there was something worse than imitation; namely a most insistent effort at originality of melody and harmony, of rhythm and instrumentation.

Yes. *Boadicea* was half superfluous, half insolent, and it was all artificial, all insincere. When he perceived the truth, Harry flushed crimson as if he had been detected in a deliberate lie. Squatting on the floor he opened the porcelain stove in which he kindled a fire every evening as a precaution against the sudden waves of cold from the Alps which were wont to make Munich shiver on these nights of May; and sheet by sheet he fed *Boadicea* to the cozy flame.

## CHAPTER XI

HARRY shunned the Opernhaus for three weeks. He could not have endured *Lalla Rookh* and *Marta* and *The Barber of Seville*; so he waited for the evening of the second Saturday in June when *Tristan und Isolde* was to be publicly performed for the first time. Meanwhile attacks on the composer grew more vicious every day. Without classing himself, even for a single moment, with the great and famous Richard Wagner, Harry Coggin could not help recalling the intrigues which had ruined his own little concerts at Bulford-on-Deme. From an enemy of Wagner, who rolled the sorry details like sweet morsels under his tongue, Harry learned how *Tannhäuser* had been howled down in Paris, and he remembered the night when his playing of Schumann was stopped by yells of "Rags and Bones." He longed to stand in Wagner's presence and to tell the Master that henceforth he would have at least one defender in England.

On June 10, 1865, Munich was allowed to hear *Tristan und Isolde*. On that first night, admission to the gallery cost rather less than an English sixpence, so that the student partisans of both sides were there. Harry, sitting in one of the best seats, was surrounded by Wagner's reverent disciples. The poem displeased him less than before, while the music searched him still more deeply and mastered him still more strongly. *Boadicea* had gone out of his life like a big richly-colored soap-bubble which bursts and leaves only one drop of water behind. And yet, although his operatic ambitions were scattered to the four winds, Harry never felt a doubt that music was to be his career.

This inward persuasion became more explicit on the following Thursday, June 15th, which was the Feast of Corpus Christi. On that day Munich seemed to become a Holy City, like Rome or Jerusalem. King Ludwig and the court, the archbishop and the clergy, the generals and the troops, the burgomaster and the city fathers and the people, composed a magnificent procession in public honor of the Blessed Sacrament. The streets were beflagged, the banging of cannon answered the clanging of bells, and little children flung roses in the path of the King of Kings. In one of the churches, Harry attended a recital of Mendelssohn's *Lauda Sion* and it dawned upon him that he, "the composer Henry Coggin" as he had been called at Ulm, could set St. Thomas Aquinas' noble Sequence to loftier and more faithful music. That night he jotted down a five part setting of the verse *Caro cibus, Sanguis potus*, and knew that it was not unworthy of the mystic words.

There were four performances of *Tristan* and Harry was present at them all. On the days between, he absented himself from the opera-house and the concert-halls, but never missed a high function in a church. He was finding his musical feet at last and the composition of *Lauda Sion* went on apace. None the less he devoured every inch of print that came his way respecting the colossal projects of Richard Wagner. Though Harry's own renunciation of opera-writing was without reserve and without remorse, he felt exalted by the knowledge that he had happened to be in Munich at a junction of such supreme import. In a torn old book he had once read that there was a certain month, in the sixteenth century, in Rome, when Palestrina by composing and performing three noble polyphonic masses saved church-music from being driven back into plain rhythmic melody: and it seemed to him that this June in Munich had been equally crucial for the future of musical art. Harry would have given much for one hour's

talk with Wagner: but he had left the Ulm Hofkapellmeister's letter at the Master's house and could not rally courage to try again.

July was well advanced when a very polite note in Wagner's own handwriting was brought to Harry's inn. It conveyed an invitation to visit the Master on the morrow.

In good time Henry Coggin, warm with pride and tingling with nervousness, presented himself at the shrine. He had passed and gazed at the house so often that he was familiar with the statuary in the garden and with the projection which gave a bay-window to each of the three floors of the building. Yet somehow the place looked different. While he was waiting for the door to be opened Harry found the cause of the change. Every blind was drawn.

Into a plain room, not at all like the Aladdin's audience-chamber of the gossips, Wagner came hurrying. Instantly Harry lost all sense of the scanty furnishings; because the great man seemed to fill the room with his presence and with his vehement insistent speech. A frightful thing had happened. Schnorr was dead. Schnorr had died suddenly, the night before. There was no more Schnorr. And therefore there would be no more *Tristan und Isolde*.

Herr Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld was the tenor who had filled the rôle of Sir Tristan at the Hauptprobe and at all the four public performances. Harry was stunned by the tragic news. Years before, when his father's broken body was brought home by the light of lanterns after the Demehaven railway accident, the shock had been terrible enough, but not so stupefying as this: because the lad's earliest memories did not include a time when poor William Coggin would let a week pass without predicting total disablement or sudden death for himself and the workhouse for his family. Schnorr von Carolsfeld, however, had seemed to have been gifted by the gods with immortality. Tristan and Kurwenal, Mark and



Melot, Isolde and Brangäne were men and women of fifteen hundred years ago: yet Schnorr gave his audience the feeling of being not a tenor star but Sir Tristan himself, still living and loving and fighting. No. It was absurd to say that Schnorr was dead like the dead people lying in graves. Harry had seen him five times on the stage, tearing the bandage from his mortal wound and falling dead at the sandaled feet of his white ladye Isolda: but after every one of these five deaths Schnorr had not failed to eat an excellent supper at a restaurant in the Maximiliansplatz and to make room for an impressive quantity of dark Munich beer.

Wagner appeared to read his young visitor's thoughts: for he startled Harry by exclaiming bitterly: "Yes, Schnorr is dead this time, as dead as a nail. Now some people will be satisfied. They grumbled at him because he took an hour to die in the last act of *Tristan*: so last night he proved to them his versatility by dying as quickly as Melot. My best, my best! Thou art gone! I shall not see thy like again."

Henry Coggin had carefully rehearsed some sentences not unsuitable to a first meeting with a Master. Bravely discarding them he tried to frame some phrases of condolence. Wagner cut him short.

"Nineteen tenors out of twenty are conceited blockheads," he said, with rising scorn. "As for the twentieth . . . well, he won't bother to learn my music. Why should he when the people prefer Auber? No, no. For years to come my *Tristan* is as dead as my poor Schnorr himself. Schnorr was like a block of granite for me to build upon. Now I must cement together a dozen clay bricks in his place. But you wanted to see me? My old friend has written to me from Ulm about you."

Coggin has been assured that he would find this precious Meister a loquacious egoist, determined to do all the talking and none of the listening and with no interest in anybody's

work and career save his own. Wagner, on the contrary, drew forth, by rapid questions, a sufficient account of Harry's musical attainments and aspirations. At last he burst out:

"Thank your God that you have forsworn the theater. The beginning of my cursed bad luck . . . Schnorr is dead . . . was my being bred and born and brought up among actors and actresses and singers and scene-painters and fiddlers. You want to compose church music. So do I. Until my old friend, now at Ulm, convinced me that the editions they publish at Regensburg and Mechlin and Gratz are misleading, I studied the plain-chant. Life is too short to examine the question for myself. But you may be aware that I have edited and conducted works by Palestrina. My dear young sir, you have health and leisure and money. Soak yourself in the sacred music of three hundred years ago. I know of no other compositions which can stir the heart so deeply. Get them by heart but don't imitate them. The world moves. Ponder deeply those ancient works and strive to develop them as they could have developed them if secular music had not ousted true church-music for nearly two hundred years. I speak of Palestrina; but even in his own sphere and his own generation Palestrina was not everybody.

"As for myself," Wagner continued, "I shall never write church-music out-and-out. Nevertheless, I can call myself a religious composer, *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser* are Christian operas. I have written religiously for the theaters, just as our modern church composers have written operatically for the churches. My *Nibelung's Ring*, which I'm going to finish now that Schnorr and *Tristan* are dead, seems to be about heathen gods and people but it is a Christian drama. So is *Tristan und Isolde*. Whenever I mention in that poem Frau Minne, the goddess of love, I mean the dear God. And when *The Ring* is finished I shall complete another music-drama, intensely religious, about Christ. I don't mean my *Jesus of*

*Nazareth* which I laid aside nearly twenty years ago. Yes. Go back to England where they malign me; and tell them that though I don't believe in the Church I believe in Christ."

The great man paused. Feeling obliged to speak but not daring to discuss high or deep things, Coggin said politely: "I was sorry to hear one day that you were not well treated in England."

"Critics were paid to attack me in the London papers," said Wagner, speaking without heat or bitterness, "and they earned every pfennig of the money. Sometimes I think I disliked London because of the old noodle who led me round, like a bear. Perhaps I did n't see the real English. But I was not treated worse in England than in France and not so badly as in Germany. In Paris we had one hundred and sixty-four rehearsals of *Tannhäuser* and then the work was shouted down on the first night, for political reasons quite outside art. In Vienna we had fifty-two rehearsals of *Tristan*. The tenor Ander could n't and wouldn't sing the music. I could have got them Schnorr; but they wanted a failure. So *Tristan* was n't performed in Vienna after all. In Germany they lampoon me and swindle me. Take Dresden. *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser* are *kassenstücke* there—"

"*Kassenstücke?*" echoed Coggin, scenting a new word for his dictionary.

"Yes, Money-earning operas. Box-office successes. But the Dresden Hoftheater happens to have a humbugging legal advantage of me. They take it and never pay me a penny. Here in Munich I should starve if I had not found a more than Maecenas in His Majesty the King. And so unscrupulous are the intrigues against me that I mean to leave Munich, now Schnorr is dead, and to bury myself in my work, at Lucerne. Yes. My young friend, I say again, thank your God that you are not in bondage to the theater. In short, as our good Hofkapellmeister has asked me to give you advice, here it is.

Live within your means so that you can always pursue Art without a thought of paymasters. When I was writing the second act of *Tristan* I pawned my watch so that I should not have to accept money from persons who would have deflected me a few hair-breadths from my pure inspiration."

"I don't recall that Schumann was in need of money when he wrote his opera *Genoveva*," ventured Harry, "but it is not very good."

"You do not flatter me by comparisons with Schumann," retorted the Master. "Besides, *Genoveva* could have been much better if Schumann had taken my advice. I offered to help him with the libretto: but you see Schumann was a book-seller's son, so he concluded he must be an expert in literature. As an actor's son, I could claim to be an expert in the drama. But your Schumann did n't think so. His precious opera is pitiable. Now, you must excuse me."

In the garden a cat and a dog, bumping one another comically, came rushing to meet the Master, who gave the hound a fond poke in the ribs which sent him rolling over in the grass and then hoisted the cat upon his shoulder. With puss's tail lashing him softly in the face, the creator of *Lohengrin* was answering loud purrs with murmured baby-talk when a showy carriage drew up outside.

Instantly all was excitement. Somebody sprang out of nowhere and hustled Coggin back into the house. Two fastidiously dressed personages descended upon Herr Wagner and began to bewail loudly the death of Schnorr von Carolsfeld. Still talking, the three disappeared into an arbor. Harry sat alone in the house for more than half an hour, feeling sure that he had been pushed back by mistake and forgotten, but not knowing what to do. Suddenly the door opened and his host reappeared, with one only of the visitors.

Although Harry recognized the new-comer's pensive and anxious face, he could not recall when and where he had seen



it. It was soon evident that Herr Wagner had given some account of Harry's nationality and tastes: because the stranger, in an authoritative tone, demanded:

"Please tell me about this great festival in London, in honor of Händel, in your Glaspalast. You know we have a Glaspalast in Munich also, copied from your own. I hear that there were hundreds of players at your Glaspalast and thousands of singers. Give me your opinion."

Harry reflected before answering. His first impulse was to confess that he had never been in London and had never seen the Crystal Palace. It happened, however, that the triennial Handel festival, which was just over, interested him enormously and that he was well informed concerning it. So he said:

"Gracious Sir (*gnädiger Herr*), I think this great festival does some good, because it makes many thousands of people sing Handel or listen to Handel who would otherwise know little about him. But it cannot be acceptable to musicians who revere their art. I do not see what is to prevent the managers from increasing the number of choralists to fifty thousand: but the solos must sound feebler and feebler as you make the choruses stronger and stronger. I think no performance of Handel is good which makes the recitatives thin and weak. The recitatives should determine all the rest. Furthermore, if I am not mistaken, the band was intended by Handel to be as numerous as the chorus."

Coggin was saved from displaying his ignorance of English musical life by Herr Wagner, who launched out into a scheme for the Glaspalast which had nothing to do with Handel. When the pensive stranger rose to leave, Coggin moved forward to shake hands with him, but this ordinary and natural action seemed to cause something like consternation and before he could realize what was happening Harry was again alone.

He heard the carriage drive away. Herr Wagner returned

and once more escorted the young Englishman through the garden. At the gate he tried to be off-hand; but there was a strange emotion in his voice as he said:

“That Gracious Sir as you called him is a poet, a philosopher, an artist. That Gracious Sir is destined to play a great part in the unification of our divided Germany. That Gracious Sir lives misunderstood and undervalued amidst a world of self-seeking fops and traitors. For that Gracious Sir I may feel bound in conscience to sacrifice all my art-plans, all my new ease of mind, so as to save him for Germany, so as to lay by his hand a firm foundation for German art in the future. That Gracious Sir is His Majesty the King of Bavaria.”

A cat may not only look at a king but may also close with his tail the mouth of a courtier. Leaping up from the grass, the fluffy animal swarmed up Herr Wagner's fine coat as quick as lightning and cut short the discourse. As for Harry Coggin he mumbled some meaningless syllables and fled.

## CHAPTER XII

OUT of respect for the Ulm Hofkapellmeister, Harry had installed himself in one of the Schützenstrasse hotels, rather than in a small gasthaus or pension. Although this choice cost him three pounds a week as compared with thirty shillings it gave him a better address from which to use his letters of introduction and it enabled him to hear a good deal of Hanoverian German and travelers' French as well as the strange German of Bavaria. Further, it afforded him frequent peeps at English papers, such as *The Illustrated London News*, and at stray journals and magazines left by passing tourists. It was from these sources that he had drawn the facts about the '65 Handel Festival on which was based his answer to King Ludwig's question.

Into this most respectable hostelry as Harry sat eating the rather pretentious evening meal, which was neither French dinner nor German supper, a young Englishman entered. Striding along the room with a masterful but most genial air, he halted at Harry's table and exclaimed:

"The identical, *inoublable*, inimitable, inestimable *unvergänglich* same! Mr. Coggin, I am delighted, ravished, enchanted, transported, to renew our too brief acquaintance-ship."

Harry quailed. Even before the new-comer spoke he had recognized the wandering young gentleman who had shown him pictures and had tried to show him certain other sights in Amsterdam over thirteen months before. He managed to answer:

“Good-evening, Mr. Huntly-Martin. I am pleased to meet you again.”

“Can’t say you look it,” chuckled the other. “But don’t be afraid. I’m not going to drag you this time into dens or haunts or lairs of vice and iniquity and infamy. Truth is, my dear Mr. Coggin, I’ve often tried to kick myself over that affair. Went to your hotel to say so. Did n’t even know your name till the landlord told me. But you’d absconded. I don’t mind admitting you did me good. Believe me or not, as you like, but I was so much upset that I did n’t stay in Aunt Tiddens’ wicked old hole two minutes. Cleared out almost as soon as you did. Sat in a café as dull and respectable as a church and wrote good-boy letters home, all about my doings—or nearly all. Had n’t written for weeks, except asking the guv’nor for more money. Not sure that I did n’t even try to say my prayers that night. No, Mr. Coggin, don’t be offended. I mean this seriously. I was never dirty-minded and you made me see certain matters in a new light. You forgive me?”

“Of course I do, Mr. Huntly-Martin.”

“Then we’ll both forget. But the way, you seem to find out where to dine and wine. I still remember that bottle of Brancanac ’48 at your inn in Amsterdam; and, by Jove, I’m inquisitive about what you’re eating and drinking now.”

“They call this an ink-fish. It comes from the Adriatic. The white wine is Hungarian Nessmühler. Allow me to ask the waiter to bring you some of the ink-fish and a glass,” said Harry cordially. After his shock at Herr Wagner’s house that morning, there was something fortifying in the sight of a fellow-countryman.

“As you are the body, soul and spirit of hospitality,” answered Mr. Huntly-Martin, “I will not only eat ink-fish with you, but also the rest of the dinner, even if you give me blotting-paper steaks with boiled lead-pencils and fried pen-wipers for the next dish. Moreover, I will drink my full half



of your Nessfuddler, or whatever you call it. Fact is, my dear fellow-Briton, I am here on business. We can settle it while we dine."

Harry's acute anxiety did not prevent him from giving punctilious instructions for his guest's comfort. To follow the Nessmühler, he ordered a bottle of old Prälätenwein from the Stiftskeller of the Augustine monastery at Klosterneuburg in Austria. They ate almost in silence some fried breasts of chickens with mushrooms. Then Mr. Huntly-Martin said:

"To a certain or uncertain extent I represent to-night the *potestas Britannica*, the might of Britain. In my ugly face you are to behold the fair lineaments of our most gracious Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria, whom Heaven save. Hear and obey, as a loyal liege."

Harry was mystified until he remembered Mr. Huntly-Martin's allusion, at their first meeting, to "our Minister at the Hague." Seizing upon this clue he asked: "Do you mean that you are now attached to the diplomatic service?"

"That's it," answered the vicegerent of Majesty. "Perhaps 'semi-attached' were a more precise phrase. Never mind. The point is that I have come direct from the British Minister here in Munich. In a word, the Minister has been requested to give information as to the social position and character of Mr. Henry Coggin and to explain why he stays so long in Bavaria. Now look here, Mr. Henry Coggin. I'm expected to be tremendously diplomatic about it: but when I heard the name 'Coggin' I simply said to myself 'Well, I'm damned! Blowed if it ain't Saint Coggin of Amsterdam.' So here I am. Now then. Thy secret dark declare. What is your real name and rank? It's going to make a difference here whether you are of noble birth, as I believe you are. Out with your name or title."

"I am Henry Coggin," said the examinee, with a sinking heart.

“Henry Fiddlesticks. Come, come. When I was in Darmstadt—beastly hole, Darmstadt—I met an Englishman, Sir Richard Brasher. Told me about your races on the Moselle. Wanted to know if I ’d bumped against you anywhere. Said I had, of course. Then he told me his discovery—Coggin and Incog, you know. He said you cheeked it out and would n’t admit it and that you swore your father was a rag-and-bone man. But this time, Mr. Incog—or Lord Incog, or whatever you are—it won’t do, my boy. We can’t send you to Nuremberg and put you to the torture of the Iron Maiden, though she’s only a hundred miles away; but you must please oblige us by coming out of this incognito.”

“I am truly Henry Coggin and nobody else,” protested Harry, thoroughly alarmed. “It is a pure coincidence that the syllables of my name also make ‘incog.’ When I told Sir Richard Brasher and his friend that I am a marine-store-dealer’s son, it was the simple truth and nothing can alter it.”

“Look here, hang it all,” said Mr. Huntly-Martin, “of course there ’s some catch in it, a catch I ’m too stupid to guess at. But, confound it, I can’t go back to my chief and say I ’ve failed. Besides, Germany is n’t England. You can’t play pranks with passports and stick down a false name in the hotel registers. The Bavarian police won’t have it. Remember, things are very ticklish here. Unless I ’m badly misinformed, there ’ll be trouble soon between Prussia and Bavaria—probably a war before the year’s out. The fat old Johnnies who govern this damned country dare n’t risk sheltering mysterious strangers. But listen, I ’ll tell you in confidence, although I ought n’t to do it, why I ’m here. We find you ’re a musician. The Lord’s Anointed, the new King Ludwig, has taken a fancy to you. He ’s as mad as a hatter. The King met you, did n’t he, at Richard Wagner’s house? Wagner’s as mad as His Majesty, or worse. The King means to take you up and make no end of a fuss over you: so the Highover-

all Chamberlain wants to know if you're respectable. He does n't mean moral. Nothing to do with that Amsterdam affair. Are you what corresponds with a 'von,' or not? For the last time, out with it."

"There's nothing to out with," answered Coggin solemnly. "I am truly Henry Coggin and truly a rag-and-bone man's son."

"Tut," snapped the diplomat impatiently. "You are a classical scholar, a composer, a critic of the arts, a hunter of the best meats and the choicest wines, and you tell me you are a rag-and-bone man's son. What's Pa doing all this time? Just swopping old pokers for new rabbit-skins and sending you tin, I suppose? No, Mr. Coggin. Damned if I'm not beginning to think you're a Prussian spy. Would you swear on your maiden aunt's Bible that your tale is true?"

"On my sacred word of honor, I swear it now," Harry answered. He spoke eagerly and emphatically. And yet, when a silence ensued, he felt humiliated and unhappy. A year before, on the green back of the soft Moselle, he had made this self-same confession to Sir Richard Brasher almost boastfully. During the long and wonderful months of his wander-year he had not become one whit less simple and there was still no trace in him of the upstart. All the same he began to wish fiercely that the dead past might be left to molder into decent dust without these frequent and boisterous exhumations. As for Mr. Huntly-Martin's tale about King Ludwig, Harry's mind simply did not receive it and it passed him by.

After gulping down the last glass of Klosterneuberger inattentively and irritably, the attaché began to speak again. His tone, though rougher and distinctly condescending, was not unkind. He said:

"I must believe you. If your father were here, I should congratulate him on the way he has had you educated. Not

much Eton and Christ Church about you, but you 're a damned sight more interesting. I admit I thought the same as Brasher—that you were a vagabond young peer, disgusted with the conveniences of stick-in-the-mud society and doing just what you jolly well pleased, like some of the sprigs of nobility in Disraeli's novels. By the way, excuse me saying so, but Disraeli's novels, now I think of it, are like a splendid marine-store. Anyhow, I agreed with Brasher. And now it turns out that we were wrong. I must tell my chief, and my chief must tell the chamberlain and the chamberlain will tell the King. Now, Mr. Coggin, wake up and pay attention. As soon as His Majesty learns that you are a genius of humble birth he will rush to take you under his patronage and perhaps you 'll never break loose. If you 're caught, it will be a living death."

He paused. When Coggin failed to speak, Mr. Huntly-Martin continued: "Let me be old-fashioned. Let me quote Shakespeare. My estimate of your future, Mr. Coggin, is like I-forget-his-name's estimate of Bottom the Weaver's: 'I don't see how you can escape sixpence a day for life from the Duke.' Y' know there 's something in Shakespeare for everything. The Kings of Bavaria were no more than Dukes in Shakespeare's time, so he hit your case exactly. I see you are alarmed. So I should be myself, in your place. Now, tell me. Can you go back to England? Have you any business that keeps you in Bavaria?"

"No," answered Coggin quickly. "None at all. As for England, I . . . I am expected back in September."

"Well, clear out of Bavaria. That 's my advice. Confound it, you don't want to be turned into a damned German, now do you?"

Although Mr. Huntly-Martin's manner had become condescending from the moment when Harry solemnly affirmed his lowly origin, there was at the same time such a glow of good-



will in his cheerful face that Harry longed to pour out his life-story and to seek the shrewd young man's opinion on the scheme of Edward Redding. "To be turned into a damned German—" was not this the very business on which he had come to Germany? For a moment he was dazzled by the prospect of escaping not only from the terrifying benevolence of King Ludwig but also from the whole complication into which Edward Redding was driving him. He tried to speak: but the old invincible reticence choked his utterance save some jumbled thanks.

"That 's all right," said Mr. Huntly-Martin gratefully. "Now my old man will say I 'm a good child. Fact is that he was worried. If you 'd squatted down in Munich as one of this Wagner clique it might have meant a lot of bother for us. The Bavarians can't see a foreigner near the King, even if he 's only an Italian tenor or a French cook, without thinking that His Majesty's foreign policy is being tampered with. There 's a bad time coming. I loathe the Prussians, but the brutes have got a real army and, by Jove, they 'll give the Bavarians and the Austrians a thrashing when it suits them. So skedaddle, my young friend, and keep out of a mess. But I must flit. Capital dinner, stunning wine. A thousand thanks. Good-night and good luck."

Before he turned into bed, Harry wrote and posted the following letter:

DEAR MR. EDWARD.

*I hope you received the Berlin stove. As you said it was for the house of a particular friend, I chose a very good one and packed it myself. The Magyar bunda was a new one, so you need not fear any contagion. I hope none of the reversible wine-glasses were broken. The silver platter from Würzburg with the name Arbuthnot on it must have belonged*

to a Scots monk. It seems many of them came to the Main and the Danube.

Mr. Edward, I have done my best to obey your wishes and to refrain from thinking much about the future. My fourteen months in Germany have restored my health and broadened my mind. I can never thank you enough. They say I speak and write German well. The Dictionary of uncommon phrases fills two thick quarto MS. volumes already. I do not play the organ so well as before, but composition is much easier to me.

Mr. Edward, if you do not object I will return to England at once instead of waiting till September. It is time to begin working. To-morrow I go to Vienna where my address will be the Zwei Löwen in the Seilergasse. I shall wait there for your esteemed reply.

I am coming to reconcile myself with the idea of dropping my name of Coggin, for good reasons. But although I admire many things in the life over here, I should find it very hard to be a German.

Hoping that you are well; also your honored parents,

I am,

Your respectful, obedient

Henry Coggin.

## CHAPTER XIII

SIX days, according to Harry's calculations, would be the shortest time in which he could receive Edward Redding's reply: so, on reaching Vienna, he shut up his mind against hopes and fears and devoted himself to the sights of the city. Vienna was the most considerable of all the cities he had visited and he expected much.

He was disappointed. The churches and museums and palaces and avenues accorded with the descriptions in the guide-books; but overpowering heat and some strokes of bad luck spoilt his first two days. He deemed it his duty to begin by a pilgrimage to the graves of the four immortal musicians who had been buried in Vienna—Gluck and Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. The rumored identification of Mozart's resting-place turned out to be untrue, and Coggin learned that all hope of tracing the pauper grave in the St. Marx burial-ground had been abandoned. In the Währing cemetery a still more depressing experience awaited him. The remains of Schubert and Beethoven, after lying for two generations side by side, had been dug up a little while before Coggin's visit, on a pretext of restoring the tombs, by a musical society: and when Harry would fain have bowed his head in homage and in prayer he was suddenly buzzed at and stung by a waspish cicerone who insisted on presenting him to the chief body-snatcher. This greasy ghoul gave lush details of the unburials. The skulls and thighbones of both the composers had been carefully measured and the ghoul knew the figures to a millimeter. He was taking breath for a further bout of grossness when the victim abruptly turned away

without giving grave-digger or guide a single kreuzer. It was Harry's custom to bestow trinkgeld rather liberally: but he would have felt like a man caught red-handed in sacrilege if he had helped to gorge this pair of leeches.

The opera-house was closed. As for the cafés and beer-gardens they confirmed all Harry had heard about Viennese gaiety and for that very reason their staccato music and laughter struck cold sparks from the heart of a lonely traveler. The main stream of the Danube flowed miles away and he could not feel sure that he would be allowed to swim in it even if he gained its banks. While the galleries delighted his eyes they also choked his lungs. Only the churches remained. He was cheered by the high-soaring nave and spire of St. Stephen's cathedral; but an hour later, under the church in the Neumarkt, a Capuchin friar holding a torch brought the sight-seer back to solemnity by leading him past a hundred metal coffins, the funeral caskets of the imperial family. Coggin gazed calmly enough on the remains of Hapsburg emperors and empresses, archdukes and archduchesses and crown-princes; because a year of diligent sight-seeing had familiarized him with the tombs of the great. Even the copper coffin of the Duke of Reichstadt, the son of Napoleon the Great by Marie Louise, gave him no sharp thrill. At length, however, the Capuchin pointed out a rather plain box in a corner and explained that, unlike the ninety-nine other boxes, it held the bones of a person who was not of royal blood. It was the coffin, he said, of a mere countess, who had been the governess of Maria Teresa. This lowly creature lay amidst the imperial dead through the benevolent condescension of Maria Teresa herself. While the Capuchin was expanding the anecdote, a shiver suddenly ran up and down Harry's marrow. He remembered Huntly-Martin's lightly-spoken warning that the patronage of King Ludwig would be a living death.

Turning the pages of a time-table in a café, Harry found



that a steamer would leave Vienna for Pest early the next morning. He could pass nearly two days voyaging on the Danube, spend two days in the Hungarian capital and return to the Two Lions in time for Edward Redding's letter. Within twenty-four hours of his first glance at the time-table the traveler sat comfortably supping in a riverside hostelry at Pest which had been recommended by his Vienna host. On his plate smoked a savory gulyas, in his glass glowered a full draught of the local wine called Turk's Blood, and across the noble Danube towered the rock of Buda, its ruinous palace and castle embossing the crags richly in the evening light.

After supper, as Coggin was standing puzzled before a lordly building not mentioned in his guide-book, an elderly gentleman addressed him very politely in English and explained that this was the Academy, only just completed. He added that Harry had arrived in Pest at a happy moment for artists. Only that very morning, the Hungarian Government had succeeded in buying for their spick-and-span new Academy a most famous collection of works of art—the Esterhazy collection. The gentleman appeared to be even more pleased that these pictures and statues were to be brought out of Vienna than that they were to be brought into Pest. Indeed it soon became apparent that he detested Hungary's union with Austria. Having persuaded the young Englishman to sit down with him in a garden-restaurant, where he ordered a bottle of red wine with the engaging name of Szanorodnyi, the Magyar said:

“Look at that suspension bridge. It was made in England—designed by the Englishman who built your Hammersmith Bridge. I was connected with the enterprise. That is why I speak English.

“Never shall I forget the opening of that bridge. A great bridge is usually opened by a royal personage. There are banners, bands of music, speeches, fireworks. The opening of our

bridge was different: though I admit there were fireworks.

"Some people had been saying that the bridge would fall if many carts and people were allowed upon it at the same moment. I will tell you what happened. Nearly eighteen years ago I was a captain in Kossuth's army. The Austrians were too much for us and we had to flee, with the enemy on our heels. It was the new bridge or nothing. We poured across. So did the enemy. We had n't time to blow it up. On those two short January days I believe that a hundred thousand men, with at least two thousand wagons and guns, crossed the Danube by that bridge. It did n't fall. And four months later, when the tables were turned, I stood near this very spot on the river bank—I had been sent home wounded a month before—and I watched the Austrians riding hell-for-leather in full retreat before our arms."

Although Harry Coggin liked the Austrians he had met, and although he had never before had warm feelings towards Hungarians, his blood raced at what he heard. Mr. Edward Redding laughed at patriotism and nationality. Mr. Huntly-Martin spoke of them with a bored and aloof manner. Here, however, was a man to whom race and racial freedom were a religion, a master-passion, a reason for being alive.

Abruptly raising his glass, the Hungarian said: "I drink to your free country."

By the light of a glow-lamp hung among the vines Harry gazed at the fine face of his new friend and knew that he was in the presence of one nobly bred and nobly born. Yet somehow he did not feel inferior. For once, his humility left him and in its place came a serene pride in his own race. He bowed, as if to the manner born; and when the other set down his glass he said, with graceful ease:

"And I drink to your country's freedom."

So completely did Harry's diffidence forsake him that he not only asked for his host's opinions on several international

topics but even gave his own. At length some brighter gas-lamps were turned up and immediately a strange thing happened. In the stronger light Harry's elderly companion was recognized by some young men, sitting at a table a few yards away. Like one man they rose to their feet and remained standing until Harry's host waved them back into their seats. Their action seemed more oriental than Prussian: more like old-world homage to a feudal lord than mere military discipline. Perceiving that he was in the presence of a considerable personage, Harry once more again became a circumspect listener and spoke no more.

"You asked just now about our union with Austria," said the Hungarian. "I believe the union will last out the lifetime of our present King-Emperor and no longer. I say King-Emperor; not Emperor-King. Remember, Hungary is a kingdom, Austria a mere dukedom. Look across the Danube, to Buda. There, in the palace on the rock, Hungary keeps her sacred regalia: St. Stephen's mantle and sword and scepter and the holy crown. You may laugh at the legend that angels were the goldsmiths who wrought King Stephen's crown: but for us it is true. Two angels shaped it beyond dispute: the angel of faith and the angel of fatherland, the angel of religion and the angel of nationality."

Lights began to twinkle in some smaller windows of the palace. The Danube's hurrying flood reflected them tremulously. Hundreds of vine-leaves over Harry's head rustled in the river breeze. As the Hungarian spoke of the saint-king's diadem his voice quivered. At that moment all the harp-strings of the night seemed taut and vibrant. Harry bent to listen. The speaker continued:

"Up to twelve years ago, St. Stephen's crown was hidden in the ground, at Orsova, far down the Danube. You young Englishmen must not be too sharply blamed for your light-

ness. Only your old men remember any great events. But England's turn will come again.

"My young friend, your remarks and enquiries convince me that you are serious, unlike most of your traveling compatriots. Permit me then to speak my mind. Your race is losing the true sense of nationality. You admire the sense of nationality everywhere except at home. When a small and oppressed nation is struggling for freedom, Englishmen are sure to be found fighting against the tyrant, and your government is the first to champion freedom's cause. But it seems to be your idea that you yourselves are above nationality. Your Scotch, your Irish, your Welsh are intensely proud of Scotland, Ireland, Wales: but Englishmen are losing the habit of pride in their own England. At first I thought it was the admirable reticence of your race: but I spend three months of every year in England and I observe the growth of a false liberalism, an easy-going, half-cynical cosmopolitanism which may be the death of your greatness. You help Greece, help Poland, help Italy: but I repeat that you only revere nationality at a distance. You are like the eclectic who built a temple and filled it with the sacred images and emblems of all religions, but had no religion of his own. I ask you. When the ordeal by fire is once more appointed for your nation, which attitude will best serve you—the attitude of arrogant supra-nationality or the attitude of soldierly patriotism, hand on the sword-hilt and eye on the advancing banner?"

He waited so long, that Harry felt obliged to attempt an answer. The best he could say was: "We are a peaceful nation. If there is a great war, it will not be of England's making or seeking."

The Magyar suddenly lost his temper. "Quite so," he exclaimed warmly. "You are sportsmen in your games, in your social intercourse, but not in the grand Weltspiel! You are



like a boy who, when he has won all the biggest marbles from his playmates, says 'Now, I don't intend to play marbles again.' Partly through the foresight and valor of your adventurous race but largely through luck and the follies and misfortunes of others, you have got more than your share. My young friend, whether she likes it or not, Britannia some day will have to recommence that game of marbles."

"We have beaten the French before," said Harry proudly.

"France is a danger, I admit," was the swift answer, "but she is most dangerous to herself. She may make a bid for glory. If so, she will reap a terrible punishment. There is a sterner enemy than France."

"You cannot mean Austria," said Harry. "Is it Russia? Or is it Prussia?"

"Austria will fight Prussia and will be defeated," said the Hungarian in low, quick tones. "Then, sooner or later, there will be a united Germany, including Austria, with Prussia at the head. I doubt if the Austrian Empire has ten years to live. You ask what will be the position of Hungary, where will be the hopes of Italy, of Serbia, of Poland? I do not know. But mark my words. And, before I utter them, please understand that I am not accustomed to discuss politics even with my intimate friends, much less with chance foreigners. Some inward force which I cannot explain compels me to speak to you to-night, although cool judgment reminds me that it is an indiscretion. Before you are my age, your country may have to fight Prussia and her tributary states. It will not be a war that you can end with one blow from Britannia's trident. It will not be a mere resistance to a sudden French-like craving for *la gloire*. It will be Rome against Carthage. If you lose, you will be sponged off the map. Mere victory will not satisfy Prussia. She will Prussianize the whole world. A big navy of paid sailors and a little army of paid soldiers cannot suffice. I love Hungary but

I love mankind still more: and it is for the good of mankind that England should still be great. I hate Austria and I believe that Prussia is the scourge of God, appointed for Austria's tyrannical shoulders: but where Austria has chastised with whips Prussia will chastise with scorpions. May God save your free land."

Without suggesting another meeting the Magyar rose and wished Harry good-night. As he stood up, the occupants of several other tables did the same and remained standing until the great man was out of sight.

In the doorway of the inn the landlord awaited his English guest with a telegram. It was from London and it had been transmitted to Pest from Vienna by those attentive beasts the Two Lions. What Harry read was this:

*Meet me September second London not before.—Writing to-day Edward Redding.*

Although the journey down-stream had been easily accomplished in the long interval between his early breakfast in Vienna and his not very late supper in Pest, Harry knew that the steam-packet would require a day and a half to beat its way back, against the strong current. A boat was appointed to leave the next morning at seven and there would not be another for forty-eight hours. He paid his bill of two florins overnight. On the morrow, after hearing Mass at six in a rather mean church, he was aboard with nearly half an hour to spare.

From a wild sky, the sun brandished scimitars of light above the Danube, till the flashing radiance burnt a beholder's eyes. But when the steamer had pushed past the old Turkish fort, and the unvisited Academy of Pest was hidden from Harry's regretful gaze, the sunshine was abruptly quenched as if a

flood of gas-light had been turned off at the main. The cordage began to moan, the clear swift Danube was convulsed as if with the writhings of a million green water-snakes and the planks of the deck shuddered.

Instantly all the passengers save one, having picked up their wraps and field-glasses and copies of the *Pester Lloyd*, scurried into the shelter of the saloons. Harry alone remained to face the fast-brewing storm. Hailing the purser he succeeded in borrowing four of the native sheepskins with their wool turned inwards and the leather adorned in gay colors. With these and with some stout thongs of the same material he made himself a suit of armor against the worst the tempest could do.

The wind shifted and the storm tarried. With a frolic breeze slapping his face, Harry gave himself up to guesses at the meaning of Edward Redding's telegram. Why was a return to London before September forbidden? The first theory was merely that Mr. Edward had holiday plans of his own which could not be deranged. Yet, somehow, Harry's instinct rejected this answer. He felt persuaded that his young patron was already intent upon some vast surprise which should be worthy to compare even with his astounding feats at Bulford-on-Deme. Harry winced as this certainty came to full stature. He felt like the poor performing dog who shivers in the wings while his too clever master struts the stage arranging the long line of step-ladders and tissue-paper-hoops and trapezes through which the hapless brute must burst and scramble and leap and tumble when the crack of the whip and the blare of the band give the signal.

Coggin's next impulse was to rebel and to assert once for all his freedom. Since the morning of his talk with Herr Wagner and King Ludwig he had become gradually less distrustful of his own powers; and his talks with Mr. Huntly-Martin and with chance acquaintances of travel had strength-

ened this new self-confidence. Not that contact with the great had spoilt him. Conceit and Harry Coggin were still wholly strangers to one another and he remained as truly modest as ever. All the same he had found his feet; and there was something stuffy and silly in the thought of being hugged and lugged about like a baby-in-arms, even by Edward Redding. Yes. He would declare his independence. He would meet telegram with telegram and would go back to England at once.

A flash of lightning gashed the sky. The scowling murk, like a crouching beast sore smitten, roared out in rage and pain. Flash followed roar and roar followed flash with growing violence. Then came the rain, whipping Harry full in the face, like gravel swished from a catapult. The Danube's gnomes and pixies and water-horses gurgled up from the depths to hail the storm with wild chaunts and neighings.

In Harry's heart, as well as in the Danube's bed, an eager tide swelled high and brimmed over. The ship's prow was pointing not only to Vienna but to England. He had turned his back upon the East and was hastening home. Furthermore, he exulted in the roughness and wildness of the coarse sheepskins and the blinding storm. After fourteen months of being waited upon in his idleness it was pure joy to feel that he was returning to toil and hardship. He knew that the steamer would halt an hour at Gran, the Canterbury of Hungary. There would be time not only to peep at the tiny old town and at the huge new cathedral but to hand in a telegram as well. He set himself to devise a firm but respectful message to Mr. Edward Redding.

After ten different sentences had been composed and rejected Coggin's fit of defiance came to an abrupt end. After all, what could be gained by bustling back four weeks earlier? On landing in England what would he do, where would he go? He suddenly understood his dependence upon Mr. Edward. Without Mr. Edward, he would have been still moiling in



Bulford, fighting a losing battle against the thin-lipped Ramburys. It was Mr. Edward who had won for him victory and honor, as well as a settled income for life. Surely it would be the most churlish ingratitude if he withdrew his confidence from this good friend and disdained all further tutelage.

The rain ceased and the growling thunder-brute skulked off muttering behind the hills. Under a still frowning sky, Harry penitently began an examination of conscience in regard to his young benefactor. Had his monthly letter to Mr. Edward been duly long and grateful? And had he, so far as circumstances permitted, obeyed the written advice which had been so thoughtfully put into his hand when he boarded *The Queen of the North Sea* at Hull? To these questions, after swiftly conning over his mental records of the long trip, Harry could honestly answer yea. He had been as scrupulous in getting rid of his three hundred pounds as he would have been in saving a hundred of it if Redding had told him to do so. He had acquired a knowledge of colloquial German which, by reason of his wide wandering, was greater than any single Hanoverian or Bavarian, Prussian or Würtemberger, Saxon or Austrian could boast. He had soaked himself in symphony and opera. He had gazed upon Germany's chief works of art and her beauties of nature. He had eaten and drunken amply and curiously; and, most important and difficult of all, he had stubbornly held himself back from such decisions and changes as could conflict with the plans which Edward Redding might be excogitating for his future. From the Freiherr, from the Benedictine, from Herr Wagner and even from King Ludwig he had run away rather than risk the smallest inability to present himself in due time to Mr. Edward, for shaping as the clay is shaped by the potter. Even in the sheerly personal matter of religion he was returning to England with his status unchanged.

Pursuing this long self-scrutiny to the end, Henry Coggin

fondly believed that he had also fulfilled Mr. Edward's commands to be young and blithe and idle. Amidst the wonderful contrasts between his gray years in Bulford and his multi-colored months in Germany he had been so brimmingly happy that he was not aware of his own grown-up seriousness. As for idleness, he honestly felt that it had been unbroken since his hour of glory in Bulford Town Hall. The truth was that he had been busy for many hours every day. His notes on German literature, on harmony and polyphony and orchestration, on painting and architecture and sculpture, would not have shamed a Leonardo da Vinci. Yet his hands had often been as busy as his brain. He carried a few light tools wherever he went; and often, on wet days, in village inns, he had asked leave to mend the broken castor of a chair or the fittings of a bedroom looking-glass or a worn-out Venetian blind or anything else that hurt his tidy eye. In scores of different bedrooms, even in some where he had stayed for one night only, Harry oiled the stiff locks of cupboards, straightened lopsided cornices, or pared the unequal legs of cane-bottomed chairs. But he had done these things in the spirit of a man receiving rather than bestowing favors, grateful for the chance of keeping his hand in; and not one of them recurred to his mind as he sat on the steamer deck marveling at the success of his long-drawn exercise in laziness and rejoicing that he would so soon be allowed once more to light fires, peel potatoes, wash dishes, break coals, carry pails of water.

A dismal fear tripped him up. What if Mr. Edward should condemn him to a polite existence among prim servants, who would regard his cooking and cabinet-making as the depths of indecorum? This dark prospect forced him to resume his guessing. But it was in vain. He lacked nearly all the data. Whether Edward Redding would or would not persist in presenting Henry Coggin as "the Hare"; whether England or America was to be the scene of action; whether music did or

did not furnish the pivot of the plan—to these questions he could give no replies. So he began to settle what he would do if, after all, Mr. Edward should slip the leash and force him to carve out his own career.

Harry's uncomplicated mind soon furnished a clear answer. Music would, in any event, be his main concern: but not as a livelihood. He did not wish to teach, even if highly profitable pupils were offered to him. As for the position of an organist, he had seen too much of the choir-loft's petty feuds and jealousies to covet such thin honors. Rather would he devote himself to the composition of church music—important works for the organ and unaccompanied anthems and services for highly-trained choirs. This, he knew full well, might earn him bread but not butter. Pecuniary gain, however, did not interest him. Once absolved from the abnormal obligation to spend nearly a pound a day, he could live so cheaply that his fixed income would suffice. Indeed he would be able to spend five or six months of every year in some fresh country. He could visit Italy and Greece, Spain and Portugal, France and Belgium and Switzerland, dividing his time between sight-seeing in famous cities and hard work at his music in country inns. This would be such an ideal life that, sooner or later, he would wring out Mr. Edward's consent to his leading it. As for love and marriage, they did not enter Harry Coggin's head.

There was a gurgling, spluttering noise: and instantly the ship's bows seemed to have smashed into the heart of a water-spout. Half an hour before, the rain had flung itself at Harry like a swarm of wasps, but this time it was as if buckets of water were being dashed in his face, bucketful after bucketful with hardly half a second's interval between. In the worst moments it was as though the boat had begun to sink and that the whole flood of the Danube was pouring over Harry's head. When the most terrible minute was over, he opened his

eyes and looked round, believing that he must swim for life: but the vessel was still afloat. On the near shore he could see the willows bending before the gale, with their foliage like bright water-weeds combed out by a headlong stream. Then the deluge began again, and once more all the waters of the world seemed to engulf him.

Harry's suit of sheepskins failed him. But there was no traitor joint in the armor of his soul. The twin flames of his hope and faith burned serenely on. God had led him by wondrous ways; and God would lead him to the end.

Teddie Redding's letter only deepened the mystery. He wrote:

DEAR HARE,

*I heard this morning that my mother is not so well and I start for Arcachon in an hour. So this must be a short note.*

*All being well, I shall await you at Morley's Hotel, Trafalgar Square, on the evening of September 2nd. Even if I had time to write, it would be best to hold back news and plans until we meet.*

*As you are in Vienna, I suggest your spending these last four weeks in the Austrian Tyrol. I cannot promise that my arrangements for your future will include a waterfall in your backyard and a snow-clad mountain peak opposite your bedroom window: so you had better enjoy such sights while you have the chance.*

*Thanks for the things. Nothing broken save one of the Popish idols and two of the beer-mugs.*

*Always your faithful*

EDWARD REDDING.

The Two Lions turned out to be on terms of brotherly love



with a Golden Eagle at Innsbruck and with a Horse, a Bear, and a Fox in certain smaller Tyrolese towns. Fortified with cards of introduction to these hospitable creatures and consoled by the knowledge that so many claws and paws were at his call, Henry Coggin boarded the steamer for Linz on the first stage of his journey home. What home was going to mean he resolutely forbore from guessing.

BOOK III  
THE RAVEN

*Tamquam avis, quae transvolat in aere, cujus nullum invenitur argumentum itineris, sed tantum sonitus alarum verberans levem ventum: et scindens per vim itineris aerem: commotis alis transvolavit et post hos nullum signum invenitur itineris illius.—LIBER SAPIENTIAE v, 11.*

## CHAPTER I

NOT knowing when he might see high white mountains and deep blue lakes again, Harry left the manuscript of his precious dictionary in safe hold at Innsbruck and freely gave himself a month's out-and-out holiday. With years of work ahead, he felt justified in breaking off study and composition for these few weeks so as to enjoy a true vacation.

Everything favored him. Nowhere had he met such delightful people as the Tyrolese. While they were intensely religious and would have died proudly in defense of their beliefs and practices, they nevertheless enjoyed life and made their guests enjoy it with them. At the inns the warm welcomes and regretful farewells rang true. Everybody worked hard, ate plenty of good food, drank good beer and wine, wore honest boots and clothes and slept dry. The average of education in these mountain villages rose far higher than in Bulford-on-Deme.

Harry's chief trouble was to get rid of his ten florins a day: because, despite the abundance of eggs and cream and fish and fowl and flesh and fruit and wine, the bills never seemed to exceed about eighteen florins a week. As for the torrents and the glaciers and the green Alps and the ice-peaks, he saw them in their utmost magnificence. Showers and sunshine made this Austrian August like an English April. Clouds went about their high business, giving to every hour of the day and to every feature of the landscape some new mien of beauty and of majesty. For a space the mountains seemed to hulk up, dry and arid; then the veils would drop from the



sun's face and every crag showed a glittering fligree of sparkling water, like quicksands and liquid rock-crystal coursing in the veins of the dark rocks.

Beyond the fine thrills of perilous mountaineering and the daily delight of big old-world meals with the sharp sauce of ravenous hunger to help them down, nothing marked Harry's first fortnight in the Tyrolese highlands. But on Monday, August 14, something happened.

It was the eve of the Assumption and Harry's quarters were in a kind of inn adjoining the house of the parish priest. He had stayed in a priestly hostel before and had enjoyed the experience enormously. This one, however, had been enlarged year after year until it had become a considerable establishment. The sacristan, a fearless mountaineer, married to a clever cook, managed it with the aid of his hard-working family, charging his cosmopolitan guests about three shillings a day.

From the nearest railway-station about twenty miles distant, two carriages, on this fruitful Monday, brought two very different parties. Out of the first vehicle there stepped an Englishman and his wife—or rather an Englishwoman and her husband. As Harry heard the lady's hard tones and glanced at the two faces, one vixenish and the other sheepish, he remembered Edward Redding's words about the sort of English people you often met in hotels abroad. The lady spoke correct German, but without the smallest concession in respect of cadence. Her mean, sharp manner contrasted painfully with the pleasant open-hearted ways of the Tyrolese whom she was ordering about.

The other party, at which the Englishwoman looked with unconcealed disapproval, consisted of a charming Viennese young lady and her elderly maid. One of the servants told Harry that this elegant visitor was a very popular light opera singer and that she came to the inn every year. The servant play-

fully added that Harry had better take care of his heart; that all the gentlemen fell in love with Fräulein Rabe; but that Fräulein Rabe, despite her profession, was as good as gold and was adored by everybody in the parish, from Father Tobel downwards.

Although he already knew well that the patrons of light opera required pretty faces and willowy forms and that they spoke disrespectfully about the ponderous tragedy-queens of the heavy music-dramas, Harry was not prepared for the loveliness which met his eyes when the young prima-donna tripped out into the ill-kempt garden and clapped her hands in affectionate greeting to the rosy mountains. She was a brunette but with such a clear and fine skin and such a healthy color that she could have held her own against any pink-and-white beauty. Harry suspected that Rabe, meaning Raven, was a stage-name: for she had hair as black and eyes as blue as his own. Though not extremely slender she was all life and grace: and her fine, restless wrists and ankles made the beholder think of a beautiful race-horse.

Later in the day, when nobody was about save Harry and the ostler, a third carriage rumbled into the yard and a dressy young man alighted. Even after hearing him give some dictatorial orders, Coggin could not feel sure of this person's nationality. He seemed to be a mixture of Swiss and Lombard and Greek and Pole: but, as the supper-bell was about to ring, there was no time to make sure.

When the meal began, Harry saw that the parish priest had joined the guests. He was a man of peasant birth and with no pretense of scholarship outside the minimum requirements of his old seminary. Although there was veal on the table, Father Tobel ate nothing save a little cabbage-soup, a plain omelette and some creamed spinach. When the meal came to an end, the kindly old man made a little speech welcoming the new-comers and especially Fräulein Rabe. He added:

“As there are some ladies and gentlemen here who are not of our country and of our religion, I ask leave to make an explanation and a request. To-morrow is a great feast—the Assumption. For hundreds of years—long before strangers thought of coming here to see our mountains—the fifteenth of August has been a holiday. Everybody goes to church in the morning, and the rest of the day is devoted to good fellowship and dancing and innocent gaiety. I feel sure that our visitors will not complain if my good hard-working servants join in this traditional merrymaking and I hope they will be content with less waiting upon, for this one day.”

The ladies piped approval, the men hawed assent. Most of the guests were Austrian Catholics who were themselves bound to hear Mass on the morrow. They knew there would be abundance of meat and drink, and that the afternoon and evening jollity would more than outweigh any shortcomings in the service. Fräulein Rabe cried out prettily that her maid Anna would make the beds and that she herself would fry a chicken for the Father’s *mittagessen*.

An acid voice cut Harry’s ear. He was seated next to the English lady, who turned to her husband and said, without any lowering of tone:

“How tiresome, Robert. If these people keep an inn they should attend to business. It seems we are to eat make-shift meals for a whole day, but I shall be very much surprised if there is any allowance on our bill. If they are so exceedingly religious it would look better of them to treat people justly.”

Only a month before, Henry Coggin would have listened to such a speech with indignation but in silence. This time, however, he felt bound to speak. He said:

“Pardon me, madam, I fear you do not understand. These inns at priests’ houses came into existence when there was no other shelter for the traveler. Mountaineers, especially English people like ourselves, had recourse to the presbytery.

They were hospitably entertained, they left behind them the cost of their meals and an offering for the church or the poor, and when they returned home they advised their friends to go and do likewise. When you have been here a few days you will wonder how so much can be given for the price. Profits are made, no doubt: but nothing goes into the priest's own pocket. It is his affair no longer, although he runs in and out."

The lady who had eaten with all the heartiness of a skinny person, simply looked Harry up and down. Then she turned to her husband, a blubbery creature with fat hands and a soft beard. Her thin lips framed a little grimace which evidently meant: "Speak. Show this impertinent fellow, who has spoken to me without an introduction, that I do not travel without a male escort and protector." Thus challenged, the spouse hastily gulped down a glass of wine, deliberately wiped his mustache with his napkin and uttered the stock phrase in which he had been thoroughly instructed. He said:

"I thank you, but we do not require information or assistance."

At that moment the door opened and a late-comer entered. It was the shifty-looking young man who had arrived just before supper. While other people were eating their soup and fish he had been adorning himself; and he now stood before the company dressed with a fastidiousness ridiculously inappropriate to such a homely dining-room. Clicking his heels together he bowed profoundly to Fräulein Rabe, ignoring everybody else. Instantly the pretty girl's bright prattle ceased. It was plain that she was most unpleasantly surprised and most grievously annoyed.

"We have found our way into a funny place, Robert," said the English lady. "The chambermaid tells me that that forward young person is an opera-singer from Vienna. Who this fop may be, goodness only knows: but there has cer-



tainly been something between them. I shall leave here in the morning."

Knowing that Father Tobel had picked up a smattering of the language from his English visitors in previous years, Harry's ears burned. But when in an oozing voice, like oil after his wife's vinegar, the husband responded, "It is a good thing I have only half unpacked," Harry took action. He lifted the salad-bowl from under the nose of the flabby Englishman who had been munching greenstuff like a buck rabbit and pressed it upon a shy little backfisch on his left who did not allow it to return. Then, growing bolder than ever in his life before, Harry started topics of conversation on his own account. His German ran so easily and rapidly that the English lady stared at him in astonishment.

The highland valley wherein the village nestled was four thousand feet above the sea. To the north and south and east, glaciers and mountains shut it in; but the slopes fell away westward, allowing the August sun to shine into the inn till supper was finished. While the servants cleared away, most of the guests dribbled out upon the ragged little lawn to enjoy the sunset. But Harry did not follow them. He had observed that the smirking dandy did not take his eyes off Fräulein Rabe and his chivalrous instincts held him at the post of danger. The lady had withdrawn into the forlorn little salon, where there was a writing-table; and Harry remembered that the salon could be entered by two doors, one from the dining-room and one from a short corridor.

Suddenly there was a scream, a crash of breaking glass and then the violent jangling of a bell. Harry plunged into the salon, followed a moment later by the innkeeper's wife. The room was so full of warm light from the sinking sun that the two figures near the window stood out like the heroine and the villain in a scene of melodrama. The man, with a fine white handkerchief, was staunching a gash in his cheek torn

by a pin or by the lady's finger-nail. The lady herself stood flashing fire. She seemed to have grown inches taller and to have been transformed from a Zerlina into an Isolda. At her feet, in a pool of water, lay the fragments of a cheap Munich vase and the scattered petals of some Alpine flowers.

The man made a dash for the nearer door but Harry leapt across his path and pushed him back towards the window. Meanwhile Fräulein Rabe's speech became more coherent. Panting with shame and wrath she exclaimed:

"This pig, this cur has followed me here. In Vienna I would n't even know him. He has dared to throw his arms round me, to kiss me. Frau Nussbaum, what are you going to do?"

Speaking with the utmost scorn, the innkeeper's wife replied that the offender should be turned out that very minute to find such shelter as he could; and that word should be sent to the innkeeper lower down the valley not to lodge the pig-dog longer than that one night.

At this threat the pig-dog merely pocketed his reddened handkerchief, shrugged his shoulders and said: "Then I had better go and pack."

"Wait," snapped Harry, on a note so sharp that everybody jumped. "First of all, you apologize without reserve to this lady: yes, and to Frau Nussbaum also. Second, you pledge your solemn word that you will never follow or in any way trouble this lady again."

Neither the landlady nor the actress had taken much heed of Coggin's presence until this moment. They had been only vaguely aware of him, as if he were merely one of those futile spectators who will always tumble in the direction of a scream or a crash or a tocsin but will never do more than stand a-gape in everybody's way. So they stared at him, astonished; and the pig-dog took advantage of their stupefaction to give Harry a rude push and to make another stride towards the door.

"You have heard?" Henry Coggin demanded sternly. "You understand what you must do?"

"Yes," said the other, "I must pack and clear out of this nest of madmen and shrews and prudes. Let me pass. That's all I have to say."

The big casements stood wide open to the sunset. A single glance showed Harry the fall of the ground outside. Before any one could guess what was in his mind he seized the pig-dog by the collar with his left hand, gripped him in another convenient place with his right, and flung him clear through the window.

With panic-stricken cries the two women rushed forward, quite expecting to see a broken corpse stretched outside. Coggin ran with them. What he saw was a rough clump of weeds and brambles shaking violently. From the midst of this oscillation rose a terrified voice, wailing:

"He has killed me!"

Instantly the sauntering guests jumped from their chairs and scampered to the spot. Even the Englishwoman and her husband, who had been sitting apart, joined the buzzing swarm. At length a head pushed itself through the nodding greenery and the crowd slowly recognized the face of their fellow-guest. Even at supper, at the height of its lady-killing, it had not been a pleasant face: but now, scratched all over and contorted with horror, it was a face to make one shudder.

"No, no," cried the sharp-witted Frau Nussbaum from the window above. "You're not killed yet, my fine gentleman. You're still alive, though you don't deserve to be." Then, turning to the visitors, she told them in decorous but forcible language of the disgraceful thing that had happened. When the hubbub died down, Anton, the innkeeper's eldest son, gravely stepped up to the bushes and presented a bill on a white plate. He stood patiently, exaggerating the attitude and expression of a waiter expecting a tip. Using language

which sent the ladies flying into the house, the pig-dog struggled out of the thorns and barked:

“Where are my things? I sha’n’t pay till I see my things.”

Lena, the chambermaid, was ready. With a cry of “Geben Sie Acht!” she deftly dropped an empty valise from a bedroom, just above the saloon. A pair of boots followed: then two suits of clothes and a hat. Afterwards, at her bidding, Anton caught brushes, jars of pomatum, and scent-bottles in quick succession. Some of the village-lads, who usually hung about the inn on fine evenings, acclaimed this rain of effeminate apparatus with whoops of good-natured derision. When the valise had been stuffed full, Anton contemptuously tore the bill in two, lugged the raging dandy out of the thorns and hurried him through the garden gate.



## CHAPTER II

THE Feast of the Assumption in 1865 fell on a Tuesday. Yet there were as many people at Mass as on any Sunday. Even the scraggy English lady and her podgy husband penetrated as far as the inner door and honored the function with their disapproval. So dense was the throng there that Henry Coggin did not notice Fräulein Rabe kneeling behind him until the congregation was dispersing.

The lady kept her distance until after breakfast. Then she walked up to Harry in the garden, held out a small hand and said warmly: "Here are my thanks. I am determined to forget the insult; but I shall always remember my champion."

Her speech was so easy and his answering flush was so deep that a stranger beholding the two faces might have thought she was the man and he the maid. To Harry's immense relief, other guests came to the rescue. All of them had condolences for Miss Rabe and congratulations for Coggin.

Early in the evening rustic musicians appeared and open-air dancing began on a wooden floor sheltered by a pine-wood. To see the young men seize their ten-stone sweethearts and swing or spin them high in the air was a sight indeed. But for the sake of the visitors, waltzes figured in the program as well as country dances. The Raven, as he heard her playfully called by people who had met her the year before, was piqued that Harry did not ask her for a dance. He stood, a mere looker-on, under a pine-tree, while the Raven whirled past him again and again, first with one partner and then with another. Harry had the appearance of a deft and delicious dancer, and Fräulein Rabe could not possibly guess that he

had never danced in his life. The Baptists of Bulford, who regarded dancing as a quick-march to hell, belonged to a world of which she had never heard and never dreamed; and when she blew out her bedroom candle that night she gave a little angry snort at the strange young Englishman who had behaved like a knight errant only twenty-four hours before and yet would not offer even the common gallantries of the ball-room.

It rained hard next day. Fräulein Rabe came downstairs intending to treat Coggin with coolness: but events were too strong for her. Frau Nussbaum having proudly announced that the old piano had been tuned, a dozen voices were raised imploring a song. The priest, popping in for a few moments, fell in with the general desire and added jocosely: "We all know that our Raven is really a Nightingale." But a deadlock arose. The Nightingale had brought music with her, it was true: but who was to play it? One lady after another shook her head.

Not until he was absolutely sure that nobody else would come forward did Harry Coggin modestly rise from his corner seat and approach the piano. The company clapped vigorously. This refined young Englishman, who spoke German like a native and could throw bigger men than himself through windows, had already attracted them: and now he was turning out to be a musician too.

In this almost ecclesiastical atmosphere the Raven eschewed showy examples of the lighter Viennese school and chose songs which suited Harry's grave style and playing. At the end of the first song she took advantage of the noisy applause to bend down and say:

"But you play divinely."

The proceedings developed into a song-and-pianoforte recital. Having heard most of them in the beer-gardens, Harry

was able to delight the auditors when they wished for certain pieces of the day. He played, however, some of the more melodious and lucid pages of the great masters also. Gaining confidence, and wanting to make a contrast after playing an adagio of Beethoven's, he dashed into Handel's "Harmoonious Blacksmith" with an additional variation and coda of his own. As he finished it, a gray-haired Austrian approached him and said: "Sir, that is one of my favorite pieces, but I never heard the last part of it before. I know that the great Handel lived in England. I beg you to tell me where I can obtain the complete work. Will you write down the publisher's name?"

"It is not published; not the last part," Harry answered. The Raven was listening to him and he blushed to the roots of his hair. Light flashed into her face and she cried:

"I have guessed, I have guessed! Herr Fecht, our Meester Englischman composed it himself. I shall sing no more. We are in the presence of a genius."

A bell rang, announcing the glad news that the high joys of Art were to make room for the pleasures of the table. On entering the speisesaal Harry perceived that some guests had left and that he had been "moved up" in his proper turn to a seat which happened to be opposite the Raven's. Hardly was the lady seated before she raked him with questions. Under what professors had he studied? Did he compose songs? Had he written an opera?

Harry fenced unsuccessfully. He admitted at last that he had half-finished an opera but made haste to add that he had burnt every page of it after hearing Herr Richard Wagner's new music-drama two months before. This news excited the Raven and she rattled out some second-hand jests against Wagner's theories which Coggin repelled with spirit. Everybody except the Englishwoman and her husband, who had remained

at the inn after all, listened with open pleasure to this unexpected dialogue which lasted from the frugal bread-soup to the delicious mehlspeisen or snow puddings. The elderly Austrian, as he rose from the table, bowed to Harry almost reverently and said in stiff French: "Pardon, monsieur, but I shall always remember this day when I am told that England is an unmusical country."

The argument welled up again under the veranda while loud rain still poured straight down. One by one the other visitors decided that they were having too much of a good thing and they slipped upstairs to sleep off their ample mittagessen. For some time Harry did not notice that he was sitting alone with a charming young lady. He became conscious of the tête-à-tête only when he happened to turn his head and glance towards the salon window. Stern and erect, the lean Englishwoman was watching him. Instantly, Harry felt scalding hot all over. He thought, in his innocence, that he had committed an impropriety and he bitterly reproached himself for his thoughtlessness in leading Fräulein Rabe into a censurable position. Blurting out an unskilful apology for presuming so long upon her patience, he hurried away, leaving the Raven not less vexed than puzzled.

At supper that night candles had to be placed on the table, because of the mists and clouds. In the cheerful light Fräulein Rabe appeared twice as beautiful and ten times as sprightly. Perhaps the candles recalled the footlights. She gave Harry less rather than more of his share in her conversation. Her sallies kept Father Tobel's end of the table bubbling with delight, and her gaiety was as innocent as a child's. Had he been more skilled in women's ways Harry would have seen a chink or two in her armor of disdain. In his ignorance he simply concluded that he had exceeded discretion at the earlier meal and that the lady, by mildly snubbing him, was



putting herself right with the company. He accepted the light punishment as just, and did not join the others when smoky lamps were lit in the chilly salon.

Before dawn the sky cleared and Harry strode straight from Father Tobel's Mass up the steep valley. By noon he had reached a height of nine thousand feet. Looking down, he saw the woods and the church and the inn and the chalets, all sharp and shiny and tiny. Just below him, in the vast bowl of the upper valley, spouting cataracts and bursting torrents were challenging one another from every side, roaring like lions and bellowing like bulls. In the depths of the cauldron, great curding waters throbbed and seethed. Around him the highest mountains, blank and silent, exalted their bright horns into the blue sky. Eternity itself seemed to dwell among those white domes and snow-crueted gables.

Never before had Harry drunk in such wine-like air and listened to such god-like voices. And yet, although this was beyond doubt the climax of his wander year, a little ache of discontent dulled his happiness. For once he failed in that all-day-long gratitude to God which was the habit of his soul. He explained this dulling of his spirit's fine edge by telling himself that he was hungry: but at the sight of his bread and cold chicken and cheese and wine set out in the snow he discerned what had gone wrong. His trouble was simply that he could n't be in two places at once. The solitary mountain-top was glorious beyond all imagining; and yet how cheerful it must be down in the inn! His watch told him that the dinner-bell had just done clanging. Here amidst the eternal snow the thin wind stung cold. Down there it was warm. There would be flowers on the table and warm dishes coming up from the kitchen. There would be jocund faces, eager talk, friendly laughter. Fräulein Rabe would once more be the life of the table, opposite his own empty chair.

Although it was the Raven's black tresses and violet eyes

and dimpling chin that rose up before Harry's mind he was not conscious of wishing for the lady's society any more than for Father Tobel's or for Herr Fecht's. He considered himself definitely dismissed from her favor, and would not in any case have presumed to mate himself with her for a single moment in a romantic dream. Yet, when she had once come into his head, she would not go out again. As he painfully descended towards the glacier, Harry remembered again and again, with flushes of pride and pleasure, her raptures about his composition. What if to-morrow should be rainy and she should ask him to play again? He called to mind his compositions for the piano and all of them seemed old and dry. Why should he not please her by composing a new albumblatt in her honor? Taking out a sheet of music-paper he headed it *The Raven* and jotted down the happy inspiration which instantly possessed him.

Meanwhile the mid-day meal which Harry's imagination had pictured in such lively shapes and cheery colors was dragging along like a funeral feast. Fräulein Rabe came downstairs prepared to take the young Englishman gradually back into favor. She had turned over in her clever head some telling sentences about music and the theater so as to hold her own. When the fish was served and Harry's chair still remained empty, a pain like toothache and hunger and thirst all at once made her turn suddenly white. He had left the inn and gone back to England! At that moment, the poor Raven knew for the first time in her short life what it was to be in love. She had sung hundreds of times about her fond heart's yearning and had regarded the phrase as a mere theatrical property like her gilded tin coronet and the cotton-wool ermine which she wore when taking the rôle of a princess. Now the strange pangs in her breast, as if the very fountain of her life was first congealing into a little hard knob of ice and then

suddenly thawing and gushing forth again like a hot spring from a rock, told her that she had a heart indeed and that it could break and bleed.

So clever an actress would have found it easy to dissemble her pain and to affect light-hearted gaiety. But it was too late. The thin-lipped, keen-eyed Englishwoman stabbed at the hapless girl's vitals with a glance more cruel than a vulture's beak and tore out her secret. Fräulein Rabe blushed scarlet. For a moment she hated Harry Coggin—hated him because he had made her love him, hated him because he was not with her, hated him most of all because he was a compatriot of that utterly hateful woman.

“Where is our new Schubert, our young Englishman?” asked the elderly Austrian. And although the Raven helped herself to salad and pretended to ignore the question, her blood raced when she heard that he was climbing an easy mountain and would be back for supper. But her wrath remained.

At two o'clock the smarting beauty moodily accompanied Anna, her maid, to their favorite spot on the fringe of the pine-wood, where the afternoon sun could cheer but not scorch her. In preceding summers, the Raven had been deliciously happy in this fragrant nest. For an hour or so it was her habit to read a Vienna journal or a novel and then she would stretch herself out on a thick rug and lie basking in the peace of the warm forest and the cool mountains. But, on this Thursday afternoon, peace would not be wooed and won. Twenty times she resolved to keep her gaze fixed on the glittering waters and rich pastures of the lower valley: and twenty times she caught herself glancing hungrily at the eastward track by which Harry must return from the glacier. At last she gave up the struggle and yielded herself softly to a sweet day-dream.

Fräulein Rabe was not only an actress but boasted an actress for her mother too. At no time had she been forced to strug-

gle. With even half her talents and good looks she would have been assured of Vienna's good-will, by reason of her mother's popularity. When as an orphan maid of eighteen she came out of a convent school and began her stage career, the older actors and actresses and managers had gathered round her like a bodyguard of foster-fathers and god-mothers. Some of these champions of virtue had been sad dogs in their youth and for that very reason they devoted themselves with zeal to the Raven's professional and moral welfare. As for the younger players and playgoers, they readily fell in with the rule that Fräulein Rabe was a young lady to be respected. To silence a new-comer or foreigner who might begin to speak or act loosely in her presence was a token of one's own good standing in Vienna's theatrical world. Besides all this, the girl's unaffectedly virginal air, her simplicity, her unfailing generosity to less fortunate colleagues, her complete lack of jealousy, her kindness to beginners, her solid though reticent piety and her irresistible sprightliness had made her a woman sacrosanct and apart.

For the first three years, this bird-like creature loved the stage without reserve. She was a true Viennese, adoring light and laughter and color and melody and rhythm. But a time came when her protectors began to let her see they judged her old enough to take care of herself. Gradually the atmosphere surrounding her grew a little grosser. Adorers, who had been content to send her bouquets in exchange for one radiant and friendly smile, became more insistent, until her faithful Anna restored the situation by soundly boxing the ears of a self-invited visitor. At the theater itself she commanded as much respect and affection as ever: but as she came to know more and more of this naughty world and to learn the manner of life of colleagues whom she had held in high regard, her spirit sickened. To make things worse, she was condemned at that time to sing inane words, set to music which was



advertised as "all sparkle" but was in truth all froth.

Reclining on her rug Fräulein Rabe gazed up through the russet tree-tops at the white and blue sky. The scent of the pines came to her nostrils deliciously, and she was seized with a loathing for the reek of the theater, its cosmetics, its gas-lights, its crowd of over-fed people. In such a world, what was to be her future? She was making a great deal of money, but owing to the thoughtlessness of her professional sisters who kept on incessantly applying to her for grants-in-aid which they called loans, she had saved only a few thousand florins. When youth and beauty faded where would she be?

The slender, muscular figure and fine pensive face of Harry Coggin appeared before her soul's eyes, came close to her, soothed her, refreshed her, heartened her. Harry was not elegant like the exquisites of Vienna. He had no easy flow of banter and gallantry, no airs and graces towards women. For these very reasons he had brought her to a halt before him and now, without the shadow of a doubt, she was in love with him, as wholly and terribly in love as any desperate damsel she had met on the pages of romance. What rapture it would be if, instead of returning from the glacier down the stony path, he should come singing and swinging over these pine-needles, by the long way round! He would read her secret in her glad eyes. He would say to her gently: "Now I know that you love me as I love you." He would take her in his arms and lay her head upon his firm shoulders. He would . . . yes, he would press upon her lips a kiss, many kisses.

She dreamed on. Probably he was not rich, but at least he had the means of livelihood. She would join her little hoard to his. They would travel together, just they two, in Egypt, in Italy, in France, in Spain, and in his own misty England. He would write great music and especially wonderful songs for her to sing. She would forsake the stage, but sometimes they would give recitals, just they two. She was

sure he was a good Catholic; for had she not seen him at Mass? They would visit Rome and the Holy Land and that new shrine in the French Pyrenees of which everybody was talking, just they two. And somewhere they would have a little house, just they two, on an island in an Italian lake, where they could keep the spoils of their travels and where they could grow old together when travel-days were done.

Her fancy went on blowing a bubble as round as the world and painted with all the colors of the rainbow. Suddenly it broke and she sprang to her feet so abruptly that the dozing Anna woke up in a fright. Fräulein Rabe reassured her and began pacing to and fro. She tried to scold and ridicule herself as a silly school-girl and even to despise herself as a forward hussy, but it was no good. It became as clear as noon-day that she had met the first and only man she could love and that she must either actively assist Providence or reproach herself for false modesty to her life's end.

Harry's evident shyness did not daunt her. On the contrary it justified her plans and would give zest to their execution. The principal danger was that he might, after the fashion of those restless young Englishmen, stuff his gear into his rucksack and depart from the inn without even saying good-by. And there were other doubts and fears. Perhaps—and this was probable—his family would sternly forbid his union with an actress and a foreigner. Or perhaps he was betrothed already to some fair-haired English miss.

That night the Raven proved that her fame as the loveliest girl in Vienna owed nothing to powder and paint and limelight. She appeared in a wine-colored dress, with cream roses in her hair and on her breast. Unlike all the other ladies at the table she wore nor finger rings, nor ear-rings, nor brooch nor bracelet. When Harry met her eyes they flashed a challenge at him which would have set far cooler men on fire:

but the burning darts were quenched in the dews of his humility. Perhaps the case would have been altered a little if those clear violet eyes could have had Harry all to themselves. He was painfully aware, however, of two gray-green eyes as well—the eyes which had stared at him the afternoon before from the salon window.

Innocently interpreting the Raven's cream roses as the signals of some festivity upon which he must not intrude, Harry, when supper came to an end, was about to steal out of the speisesaal and to lay his weary limbs in bed. But the lady stopped him in the doorway and said:

"Last night, Herr Musician, you played truant. I was very angry with you. I wanted to sing and there was nobody to play."

The gray-haired Austrian backed her up and Harry was gently borne along into the salon. Fräulein Rabe sang half-a-dozen songs by Schumann, most of them a shade too grave for her trilling, ringing voice. When it came to playing, Harry too chose Schumann until some of the hearers grew restive.

"I insist on hearing more of your own," said the lady. "In reparation for running away last night, you shall do as I bid you. Play me the very latest of your compositions. Have you composed anything since you came here?"

"Yes," Harry answered, with another of the quick blushes which she found so adorable.

"When? Tuesday? Yesterday? To-day? I see it was to-day. How charming. Play. I command you."

Harry was not loth to comply. He believed the new album leaf to be the best thing he had written and if the salon had been empty he would have slipped in before supper to strum it. With sun-browned fingers he began to play. Fräulein Rabe quietly sat down behind him. It slipped Harry's memory that his guide-book was on the little table beside her and

that the penciled manuscript lay folded inside it. He warmed to his work, not without frequent pangs at the shortcomings of the piano. When he stopped, everybody applauded and the ladies resumed a spirited discussion on the best sauce for a fish from a lake in Hungary, much loved of the Viennese. Underneath through the din, a clear little voice said softly in Harry's ear:

"Thanks and thanks and thanks. It is most beautiful. And you composed it all for me."

Harry started as if he had been shot and swung round so swiftly that his cheek struck a petal from one of her roses. Her hands were locked behind her, hiding something from him. He glanced towards the guide-book and saw that the folded sheet of thick paper no longer bulged between its leaves.

"Forgive me, clever Meester Englischman," she pleaded, in tones lower and more delicious than ever. "I did not mean to do it. Whenever I see a book I pick it up; and before I knew what was happening I saw my name. Say that I am pardoned. Say you are not angry. And promise that when you have made a copy the original shall belong to me."

The elderly Austrian crossed the room and sat between them, pouring out compliments. When he pressed for the name of the new work, Harry described it as simply an Allegretto in F Minor; whereupon the black-haired maiden protested, saying:

"Dear Herr Fecht, I am in disgrace already with our grumpy Englischman, so one more indiscretion will not matter. It is a secret, but this piece is for me and it is called *The Raven*."

Herr Fecht paid some more compliments and rounded them off by saying: "This Raven is far more interesting than Schumann's *Prophet Bird*. And he is not at all like an old raven sitting on a skull and croaking. He is a very young raven, perching among spring leaves, trying to be a thrush."



One guest after another came up and joined the group until Fräulein Rabe was queening it in the midst of an admiring circle. She took pains, however, to make everybody praise the talent of Coggin; and when breaking-up time came she contrived to say to him quietly: "You have not told me that I am forgiven, or that I may keep this manuscript."

"You did not know it was in the book and you will do me a great honor by accepting it," said Coggin. There was a glow of pride and gratitude in his face which she mistook for a very different sentiment and her heart beat fast with joy. As if by accident she brushed her hand against the rose from which Harry had already struck one petal, till three or four more creamy curly leaves fluttered to the floor.

"Good-night," she said; and then added "auf wiedersehen."

Harry responded politely and she moved quietly from the room. Through the crack of the door she looked back, fully expecting to catch him stooping and picking up the petals. Instead she saw the young man simply pocket his guide-book and walk towards the other door.

### CHAPTER III

**A** WAKING very early, Fräulein Rabe shook her coarse pillow and settled down to hard thinking. The night had not weakened her conviction that life could never be the same again and that in no circumstances would she return to the stage. She pitied herself to the extent of shedding a few tears. Having reached the ripe age of twenty-three without an affair of the heart, she knew that her present case was a serious one and that this sudden first love would also be her last. If she should fail to-day, or to-morrow, or on Sunday at latest, then life would be a failure too and there would be no refuge from incurable heart-pains save the old convent.

Thoughts of the convent brought back to her memory some words of a certain Sister Philomena who had charged her over and over again to hear Mass in every crisis of life and thus give the Holy Spirit a chance of speaking audibly to her soul. Instantly she sprang out of bed. Heaven should decide. Without arousing Anna, the Raven made the simplest toilette and stole downstairs.

The little church was empty. She was not in the least disappointed by the absence of Coggin. His presence in church on the preceding Tuesday was natural; because the Assumption was a day of obligation. Many young men in Vienna heard Mass dutifully on Sundays and high festivals but practically never on ordinary week-days. Indeed it would have astonished her to see Harry there. The lonely girl went forward to the front chairs so as to kneel as close as possible to the Blessed Sacrament. She heard other worshipers set-

tling down behind her but did not turn her head. The bell rang and the curé entered from the sacristy, with Fritz Hofer the wheelwright as server. Fräulein Rabe opened her book with an almost fierce prayer that light might come before she closed it. The light was given her in that same instance. It shone out from the headline of the page before her. In German she read simply: "The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass."

Sacrifice. The word pierced her like a white-hot blade and she quailed before it. So she was to rouse herself from her fond fancies and set her feet upon that hard road which climbed heavenward between hedges of cold white lilies. She must forget the fragrant dream-path, winding through brakes of roses whose very thorns were sweet because their light scratches proved to lovers that their veins ran indeed with warm red blood.

Yet . . . were there not many kinds and ways of sacrifice? The Raven had been taught her religion well, and it was her practice to follow Mass in the very words of the missal and not in the platitudinous paraphrases of pious middle-men. She wrenched her mind away from generalities and bent over the book. In a clear voice the celebrant began the psalm which she knew was being said in the self-same Latin at a hundred thousand Catholic altars.

"*Introibo ad altare Dei*: 'I will go in unto the altar of God,' " said the priest. And the wheelwright in his rough Latin answered:

"*Ad Deum, qui laetificat juventutem meam*: 'To God who maketh my youth glad!'"

At that moment some butter-fingered believer let slip a brass-clasped book which rapped the floor loudly. Fräulein Rabe turned round; and among the few faithful she saw Harry Coggin kneeling in an obscure corner and evidently saying his prayers. The sanctity of the place and of the hour could not hinder her soul from rushing to meet his. The other wor-

shippers seemed to sink into the ground. She and Harry. Harry and she, just they two were hearing this Mass for heavenly guidance. She buried her face in her hands, trembling with gratitude. She needed the book no longer: because the Holy Spirit descended upon her, not only shining like a great light but also burning like a great fire which fused into unworldly unity the two contradictory messages she had just read. God was about to make her youth glad: but the gladness was to rise higher than mere pleasure. It was to be the gladness of sacrifice, of holy sacrifice.

On a gaudy side-altar stood a satin-clad wooden figure of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors. Our Lady's heart was pierced with seven real swords. Fräulein Rabe gazed at the image and meditated upon it. Yesterday she had dreamed of a life-long honeymoon, with deep draughts every day from the spiced and scented cup of joy: but this morning she knew that a pierced Hand would hold out to her another chalice. Perhaps it had been thus even with the Blessed Virgin herself. Perhaps the Holy Mary had expected at first that her Son would receive naught save love and honor and obedience from men and that her own life would be all glories and roses. And there, all the time, whetting themselves sharper with every tarrying day, were the seven swords of her seven sorrows.

The Raven bowed her head again and began to wonder what swords were a-sharpening for her own soul. She felt sure that she would not have to suffer the wrongs of certain wives she knew in Vienna who were yoked to unfaithful, or drunken, or unbelieving, or gambling husbands. Of Harry's ingrained and ineradicable goodness there could be no doubt. But once married to this earnest young genius, might not his primness chafe her wild young spirit? Was it not almost certain that in such serious company she would grow old before her time and that she would bitterly lament her lost gaiety and liberty?



The unheeded petals had proved him to be the phlegmatic Englishman so often depicted by the satirists. Yet, if these were the only sacrifices, she would make them proudly. Yesterday she had thought of herself and of her own happiness. Now she thought of her beloved and she was ready to creep along the ground in chains if thus he might soar more freely.

The server rang the bell for the Elevation. The celebrant held up the sacred Body and the precious Blood. And, without a moment's warning, black darkness swallowed her up. This was Calvary. An earthquake seemed to shake the world she had known from under her feet. A sword, seven swords, seventy times seven swords crept and turned in her flesh. And when the darkness lifted and she could gaze once more at the sorrowful Mother she understood that God was going to require of her a sacrifice indeed: a sacrifice as big as the mountains: a sacrifice such as would make the little troubles and misunderstandings of the home seem no more than grains of dust: a sacrifice in darkness and in desolation that should break her body and shed her blood. Yet, out of this fearful cloud, there burst a heavenly light. She crouched like a poor lamb beside the sacrificial stone: but while she shrank she was glad.

With the departure of the priest from the altar and with the clattering of fifty feet on the floor, her mystical vision and exaltation left her. All that remained was the noon-day clearness of her belief that God Himself had brought the Englishman into her life and that it was her bounden duty to further some vast design, whatever it might cost. She waited for Harry at the church door and walked quietly back with him to the inn.

As it was still very early and the speisezimmer was not yet swept and dusted, the faithful Anna had taken it upon herself to set a table in a sunny corner of the garden and to order for her hungry young mistress a pitcher of hot chocolate

with milk just milked, eggs just laid, country bread, butter churned the day before, and a pot of heather honey. Harry could not help envying his pretty companion. He was on the point of entering the house when she demanded:

“Why go in? Breakfast inside won’t be ready for half an hour at least. Anna thinks I have the appetite of a giantess. There ’s quite enough for two.”

Harry sat down, uttering warm thanks. The Raven filled two thick cups with chocolate; and while Anna was away boiling the eggs, she burst out:

“But how shocking of us, Meester Englischman! What would your mama say and your sisters if they knew you were having breakfast all alone with an actress, not very old and not very ugly?”

“That is easily answered,” said Coggin. “I have no mama and no sisters. So far as I know I have n’t a near relation in the world.”

“Poor Englischman. You are like the poor Raven. She has many friends but no relations. But come. If your bride knew that her bridegroom was drinking chocolate with me, she would be angry, now would n’t she?”

Harry was well aware that bride and bridegroom, in the German language, did not mean a newly-married couple. Bride and bridegroom meant a betrothed pair. He replied:

“That is answered just as easily. You will believe that I have no bride when I tell you that I have neither written a letter to nor received a letter from any lady since I left England nearly fifteen months ago.”

“I am glad,” she said. “I don’t like making people angry. The English lady and her husband up there in the house are angry with me all day long. You ran away from England to escape such people? And now they have followed you here, up into the mountains. I suppose you will run away from them again?”

"Not exactly," said Harry. "I shall not leave here till Sunday afternoon. At the beginning of September I must be in London."

Anna returned with the eggs, so Fräulein Rabe was able to conceal the turmoil which Harry's announcement had set going with her. His matter-of-fact tone hurt her even more than his indifference to her rose-petals the night before. The girl's pride rose up. She ate and drank as if his movements did not interest her any further: and she assured herself that she was most certainly not going to be so undignified as to run after this ungallant and cold-blooded young man. But when she threw a furtive glance across the table and saw once again his fine face and high forehead, his honest eyes and resolute mouth, his clear skin and splendidly-knit frame, her anger went out like a candle-flame in a wind. Here was a man indeed: but not a man of the world. Wedded to the right wife he would never knowingly give her pain; but wedded to the wrong woman his own sensitive spirit would dwell ever afterwards in a torture-chamber.

Over the honey she prattled a good deal about her years in the convent. She showed him her prayer-book which the nuns had given her and also the book-markers consisting of tiny engravings of saints and scenes from the passion. On some of them was written "For Christina Maria."

"That is my name," she explained. "Christina Maria. Do you think it is a pretty name?"

Coggin remained silent awhile. Then he said with reverence: "Surely Christina Maria is the greatest of names."

For a moment or two she was puzzled. At last his meaning burst over her: and with it came back a full memory of her experience in church an hour earlier. Until this moment there had been no significance for her soul in the name of Christina Maria. What he had said, and his way of saying it, frightened

her and made her feel how completely she was passing into his power.

Anna, who had a duenna's terror of scandal, bustled up to get all signs of the feast removed. Christina knew that the moment for action had come. She was going to ask this bashful knight to be her escort in a forest adventure. She was going to make the request boldly, naturally, with unreddening cheeks. If he should excuse himself by pleading other plans, she would have the consciousness of duty done and would leave Providence to carry out its own designs. But if he should abandon some project—and she was sure that, in his methodical way, he had made one—this would be a sign that he did indeed find delight in her society; and during three hours of close companionship it would be her feminine task to make him feel that he could never again do without her.

"My Anna is splendid," she said as the plump maid went off with the tray, "but she will only walk on roads and easy footpaths. I want so much to see the Wasserblase. Please take me to the Wasserblase."

Harry Coggin had sentenced himself to an easy and lazy day, in preparation for an exceptionally arduous climb with a guide on the morrow. A visit to the famous Wasserblase, less than two miles distant, already figured in his morning program; so he did not delay to answer:

"I shall esteem it a great honor. Allow me to look at this map."

If his eyes had not been intent on the fluttering sheet, he would have seen the color suddenly forsake her face, and then rush back again with two-fold radiance. She believed that he had broken his other plans for her and that henceforth all his comings and goings would be her comings and goings too. But what made the sunbeams dance most brightly in her blue eyes was the prospect of wandering off with him this very



moment through pensive woods and beside rejoicing waters.

As soon as their feet began to tread the soft carpet of pine-needles she said gaily: "You must never be shocked with me. Remember I am an actress. I say just what comes into my mind, without stopping to think, like the correct young ladies. You are not shocked that I asked you to show me the waterfall?"

"It is a great honor," said Harry again.

"No, no. Don't talk like that, please, Herr Englischman. See, I have spoken to you naturally and you answer me like a book. Why will you not be natural too? You let me talk all the time. You tell me nothing about England, about yourself. I told you my name. What is your name, Herr Englischman? I have heard every Englischman is named John—our Hans, our Johannes.—You are John?"

Harry shyly replied that he was named Henry and added that for hundreds of years the English, in a rough-and-ready attempt to imitate the French pronunciation of the name Henri, had been accustomed to turn Henry into Harry.

"Ah," she murmured. "How terrible. I have heard of an English Heinrich, an English Henry. He had six wives and he robbed the church. You must try to be very good, Meester Harri, to make up for that bad one."

She gave him several openings for conversation, but he failed her every time. At last, when he received silently her comments upon certain famous Italian singers who were at that time the idols of London opera-goers, Christina realized how terribly shy the young man was in her company and she cheerfully took up the whole burden of the talking. It occurred to her that he might have misunderstood her remark about the freedom of actresses; and therefore she chose her remarks and reminiscences in such a manner as to leave him in no doubt concerning the soundness of her moral principles and the exceptional immunities of her position in Vienna.

She even went so far as to tell him that she had decided in church, only that very morning, to leave the stage.

"But if you leave the stage—" Harry began. He could not finish.

"You mean, I shall starve. Well, not exactly. My parents did not leave me quite a beggar."

Fräulein Rabe felt that she was doing her whole duty by the Englishman. In the correct circles which she had known, a maiden was expected to bring her husband an unblemished reputation and a suitable sum of money. As there was nobody else to put his mind at ease on these two points, she was delicately reassuring him herself. She had never heard that in England penniless maidens, by the thousand every year, made love-matches with which every one was satisfied. At that moment the Raven's fixed idea was to sweep all artificial obstacles away from the man whom she believed to be her suddenly-revealed destiny. She was sure that Harry's bashfulness was accompanied by swiftness of perception; and she flattered herself that she had given herself the necessary testimonials without losing any of her dignity and modesty. Yet, when the silence lengthened, she did not like to think that her last words had been about money: so she added proudly:

"Besides, when I do what He tells me in church, it is for the good God to look after me."

The low hum of hidden waters which had boomed in their ears all the way, became more full and loud. The path descended in steep zig-zags. Soon the deep undersong began to be embroidered with a descant of tinklings and lappings and splashings. A shaft of sunlight drove through the tree-tops and the cascade shone straight in front of them like a living diamond.

After rain the Wasserblase, or Bubble, deserved its renown. It was a great rounded apron of crystal waters falling in front of a cavern. The floor of the cavern was filled by a deep cold

pool of sucking eddies, but there was a flat boulder where two persons could stand, with the moist walls and roof over and behind them and with the curtain of water, as thin as window-glass and almost as transparent, renewing itself endlessly in front. As Christina and Harry approached it, the wonder was made more wondrous by a little rainbow, shapely and lovely, glittering and quivering in a spray as fine as dust.

Fifteen months of sight-seeing had not cloyed Harry's appetite for beauty. As for Christina, moving water was her chief delight. Pounding surf, dancing waves, racing brooks, tumbling cataracts all fascinated her. Having agreed upon the best view-point the two young people stood silently for a long time gazing at the bubble which would not burst and listening to the deep voice of the torrent.

This summer morning was the most glorious she had ever known. For some moments her happiness was perfect. Then she began to yearn for Harry's voice and for the knowledge that he too was happy, because they were together, just they two, under an unclouded sky and on the brink of shining waters. A desperate plan occurred to her. She was almost irresistibly tempted to turn upon him and say:

"I know you are shy; but why do you not tell me that you love me? Sooner or later you will be saying those words, 'I love you, I love you.' Why do you not say them now? Life is so short. It may be that never again shall we stand side by side on such a perfect day in such a perfect place. Some time in the future we may come back here and find the stream dry or the path drowned in rain. Why should we lose one day, one moment of our love? Say the words now. I shall want to hear them thousands of times. You are cruel to cheat me of them, even for an hour."

She closed her eyes and pictured him listening to such words. She pictured his emotion, his maid-like shyness which was so delicious to her, his dear stammering of "I love you."

That he did love her, even if he did not yet know it, she was sure. At her challenge, the knowledge would come to his mind, the fire to his heart, the words to his lips. He would grow bold in love. He would adventure a strong arm around her waist, she would lean her head against his broad shoulder, he would . . . No . . . Yes . . . Perhaps his young shyness would vanish utterly and he would crown that divine minute with kisses.

But Christina did not speak. With an angry little blush at having briefly forgotten the decorum which Harry would expect of a young lady, she said abruptly:

"Let us go inside the Bubble. I have nerves of steel. They say it is only dangerous to careless or clumsy people."

She led the way. A mossy path ran into one side of the cavern. Where the path ended, a plank with a handrail bridged six feet of gurgling water and gave access to some stepping-stones. The furthest and largest of these stones rose from the very center of the pool and in the loftiest part of the cavern. It was just large enough to hold two persons standing closely together.

The Raven had to be so intent on her movements that when she found herself clinging tightly to Harry's arm she could not remember whether she had involuntarily claimed this support or whether he had offered it. All she felt sure of was the wonderful peace and comfort which his nearness gave her. There was something rock-like in the frame of this gentle youth. Many women had impulsively embraced her and she had been paternally caressed by more than one of her respectful old foster-fathers: but never had she suspected that there could be in the world such a tower for her ivy-like spirit to cling to. Before going to church, Harry had plunged that morning into an icy pool. He was as sweet as a flower, as sturdy as an oak. Anxiety for her safety so overcame his bashfulness that he not only lent his arm for her two hands



to grip, but even held her firmly against his shoulders.

In front of them hung the Bubble. They were in a stone box with a glass lid. The projecting eaves of the cave threw out the water in a clear curve—the curve of a glass shade over a gilded French clock. They stood so far behind the crystal curtain that not a drop of water touched them.

“If it began to rain,” said Christina, “we could not get wet. How strange to think that we should be shielded by an umbrella made of water.”

“It is,” Coggin agreed. At the same moment such animation came into his face that she demanded:

“What are you thinking about?”

“No doubt you have read the works of Jean Paul Richter,” he answered modestly. “Do you remember the simile of the waterfall? He imagines a man sheltering from the rain behind a cataract like this; and he goes on to say that one great sorrow protects us from many little ones. Little troubles, which would be enough at other times to rob us of our peace, cannot strike through a great sorrow.”

Harry spoke quietly, with no parade of book-learning. His fine musical sensitiveness made him unconsciously pitch his voice in unison with the noble diapason of the cataract, so that it was richer and more moving than before. His tones and his meaning thrilled Christina all over. Without knowing it, she shrank more trustfully against his side. But once more that mystical knowledge of her future, which had been vouchsafed to her at Mass, surged up in her mind. She breasted it bravely. An immeasurable sorrow was to fling a chill veil between her weeping eyes and all human joy—a veil as chill as this Bubble, which only the sunset beams of Death should rend asunder. Yet she was not afraid, not rebellious, not even unhappy. She had seen so many women growing sordid and fretful under the constant drizzling and pattering of mean little cares—cares of money, cares of meat and drink, cares

of tittle-tattle, cares of small aches and pains. But God most merciful had appointed for her some majestic grief, which should arch like a crystal dome over her soul.

When she could speak, she said: "No, I have never read Jean Paul. Did he say anything else as beautiful as that?"

Harry considered for a while. Then he replied: "Yes. Jean Paul said that when we die perhaps we shall find that we have not lost our dreams but that we have only lost our sleep."

Once again he had tuned his voice to the music of the waters. When he ceased, the cataract sang on, as if Harry was still uttering his inmost soul in cadences too sacred for mere words. Christina opened her eyes and tried to behold the outer world through the swaying Bubble. She could discern a pinnacle of rock, an overhanging tree, a wrack of foam upon a boulder. But the world of every day seemed infinitely withdrawn, as if never again would she move and breathe in it. God had claimed her already: and she knew in that strange moment that His will would be done in her soon, very soon.

Harry's tongue was loosened on the way home. A remark of Christina's about Jean Paul worked the miracle. Not that he ever let himself go to the extent of a long speech. Again and again he stopped, feeling ashamed of talking so much and listening so little; but by some well-timed question the Raven always contrived to set him going once more. The girl had expected a great deal, but his fine sense and vast knowledge overwhelmed her. He carried his learning not like a poor ass staggering under a swaying, ill-piled burden but like a richly-caparisoned horse bearing a knight in silver mail. His facts came forth like bright swords from their scabbards, not like old iron from a museum, and his judgments were as honest and life-giving as the sun in the sky. Christina's breast swelled with pride. In the German phrase this was

“her man,” and was a man indeed; an athlete, a saint, a gentleman, a scholar, a genius, a poet. It salved her pride to know that she had not fallen senselessly in love with merely a well-knit frame and a handsome, pensive face. Her man was everything, except a gallant lover; and that would come.

When her scanty store of literary erudition ran out, Christina started a new phase of conversation by asking Harry for some impressions of Prussia and the Rhineland, Bavaria and Austria. When he showed signs of lagging, she interrogated him about Cologne cathedral and especially about its resemblance to the votive church which was being built in Vienna, in thanksgiving for the Emperor Francis Joseph’s escape from the dagger of an assassin.

“Your votive church,” Harry began, “might have been better if—”

Anna rose up like the Witch of Endor, full in their path. She had been squatting impatiently on a tree-stump. Without wasting breath on any formula of respect she turned her mistress slowly round expecting to find her stained with mud of the path and drenched with the spray of the Wasserblase. A grunt expressed her surprise; but she was not entirely stultified. A little rust from the wall of the cave could be seen on Fräulein Rabe’s left sleeve and a bramble had torn a hat ribbon. Anna unfolded a flowered wrap, as thin as gossamer, shook it twice, and then draped it prettily over the young lady’s shoulders. Finally she produced a garden hat to match the wrap.

When the torn hat had been removed, Christina stood demurely with the noonday sun flashing about her wonderful black hair. Coggin had beheld, within twenty-four hours, the blaze of the sun on the eternal snow and on a headlong cataract: but the sun’s dalliance with these blue-black tresses was the most wonderful sight of all. He could not entirely repress a rush of admiration. Anna saw it and grunted

again. Christina saw it too: but she gave no sign of triumph. She simply waited, like a very good and artless little girl, for Anna to put on the other hat and to tie the ribbon under the dutifully-uplifted little chin.

Without uttering a word to anybody, Anna made the young Englishman understand that she did not approve of his further escort at that moment and that her mistress must appear at the door of the inn in no company save her maid's. Christina, who suddenly felt a shyness of a kind quite new to her, tacitly conveyed the same hint; and Harry, with perceptions quickened by his morning in feminine society, saw what was meant and asked leave to turn aside for a purchase in the one shop of the village.

Anna's precautions were vain. Down a side-path came his fellow-guests and fellow-Englishry, the thin lady and the plump gentleman from the inn. They emerged from the trees just in time to witness Harry's rather awkward leave-taking and to see Christina turn to give a farewell wave of her tiny hand. Like Harry, they were on their way to the shop and they overtook him there. To his astonishment and vexation, when he left the shop after buying a ridiculously small ice-ax for Edward Redding, the lady hastened her step and joined him. She had evidently become as anxious to talk with him as she had been to avoid him. After some stiff-jointed compliments on his piano-playing and his command of the German language, the lady began to expatiate on the shortcomings of the inn. Why had they not once had chamois to eat in four days? Was it becoming that a clergyman should allow the guides to smoke pipes in the lower room until you could n't see a yard in front of you? She added that they were leaving the next day, Saturday, so as to be within reach of an English church service. "Of course that does n't affect you," she concluded, in her most acid tones, "seeing that you are a Roman Catholic."



"I am not a Roman Catholic," said Harry.

"Not a Roman Catholic? But on Tuesday morning I could not help seeing you bowing down in the church just like the Catholics. Why, the chambermaid is always singing your praises. She says what a saint you are, going every day to their Mass."

"I can only repeat, ma'am, that I am not a Roman Catholic."

"Then you must excuse me if I speak my mind," retorted the lady sharply. "Some matters are of such importance, such infinite and everlasting consequence, that we must not be deterred from speaking about them merely through fear of being thought ill-bred or through reluctance to give offense. There are too many English people abroad who bow down in the house of Rimmon. When the poor ignorant peasantry grovel before a piece of bread and a glass of wine, I do not condemn them. God will judge them according to their lights, or rather according to their darkness. It is the priests I blame: not the wretched dupes whom they keep enslaved in degrading superstition. But when a young gentleman like yourself, bred and nurtured on Protestant truth, kneels down as you did last Tuesday, you must excuse my saying that he is an idolater, a sinful idolater. What is more, he is a traitor. If you became a Roman Catholic out-and-out I should pity you but I might respect you. I dare say you are mortally offended: but I have done my duty."

Much as he disliked the censorious shrewishness of her manner Harry could not altogether resent the matter of the lady's tirade. He was painfully aware of his false position in religion. Indeed the desire to settle it one way or another was one of the chief elements in his longing to return to England. He had resolved, nearly a year before, to keep his ecclesiastical opinions fluid until he was back in his own country. For the present he would accept rebuke without arguing

back: but next month, on the second of September, only fifteen days from now . . .

Harry's heart suddenly shrank within him. Only fifteen days! A fortnight; and then Germany would be a finished chapter in his book of life. Only a month before, he had been counting the days of his exile and he had pleaded with Edward Redding to shorten them. Now he felt an ache, a sickening, almost a terror. No doubt, he reflected, this was the spell of the mountains, which he had read about so often. And yet, if he had demanded of himself at that moment how the spell was working, he would have known that it was not a white sharp mountain-peak that had impaled his heart. He would have known that his fancy lingered under the cool branches of a pine-wood, with never a mountain to be seen, gazing at the sunshine playing hide-and seek in the glossy wings of a blue-black raven.

The thin Englishwoman interpreted Harry's evident trouble and his long speechlessness as proofs that the first part of her sermon had gone home: so she turned to Secondly.

"Although advice in the matter of the affections is almost invariably disregarded," she said, "I am not thereby released from the obligation to offer it. I have discharged one unpleasant duty. Permit me to discharge another; and pray acquit me of intrusiveness. I am thinking not only of yourself, but of your mother, your family. Nobody hates gossip more than I do and nobody has a greater detestation of becoming involved in the affairs of others. But what is going on around me is so glaring that even my slow eyes and preoccupied mind can no longer ignore it. It grieves my husband and myself to see you drifting into an entanglement which can bring you nothing but bitterness and regret. Heed this earnest and friendly warning while there is time. I know what I am talking about. I am older than you are."

As to the lady's seniority there could be no dispute: but as

to the meaning of her long and stilted speech Harry Coggin could not frame a guess. Did it refer to some further and unsuspected ecclesiastical impropriety on his part? Having no clear notion of the business in hand he simply prolonged his dumbness.

“Perhaps you are not fully acquainted with the identity and antecedents of . . . of this young person,” the lady continued. “We have ascertained that she is an actress. Not an exponent of the legitimate drama, but an employee in one of those less reputable places of so-called amusement which pander to the frivolity and levity of the giddy and the thoughtless. I grant that she is not entirely without attraction of person and manner of the kinds which appeal to certain people: and this attractiveness only makes her the more dangerous. To every eye except your own it is indisputable that this young woman is determined to entrap you. That is the reason why we urge you to leave this inn and to complete your vacation in some less unsatisfactory establishment.”

Harry came to a halt. At first the lady’s full meaning did not clarify itself from her turgid polysyllables. He looked the pair up and down; and into his mind came a sentence from his “Murray’s Handbook” in which the writer lamented that he had “almost invariably met with the kindest reception in those places where his countrymen were least known.” He remembered Edward Redding’s warning also. The lady was like a skeleton in a parchment bag while the husband, whose climb had over-exerted him, seemed to have been poured into his clothes in a liquid state, like a pudding tied tightly in a cloth for boiling.

“I endorse every word my wife has uttered,” said the husband, stepping forward. “I am a man of the world. Take our advice. Why, my wife’s own second cousin, the younger son of Sir William Lee, became entangled with a designing young female of this very class and—”

Harry swept the puffing moralist out of his path. The look on his face was so terrible that the man of the world dodged frantically to the shelter of skirts. It suddenly occurred to the fat Robert that this was the stalwart mountaineer who had already pitched one insulter of Fräulein Rabe out of the window. Henry Coggin, however, controlled himself by a mighty effort. He recalled his first encounter with these people, at the supper table, and the exact words of their frigid snub. Sharpening and hardening his voice till it could have struck sparks out of the lady's own, he said with cutting scorn:

"My answer shall be the answer you gave me when I tried to help you on the night of your arrival here. Sir, I do not need any information or assistance."

Pushing past the still panic-stricken man of the world, Harry sped down the narrow path with long strides. In five minutes the beauty of the earth had been turned to ashes, the glorious sunshine to a torrid glare, the sweet breeze to a dusty wind. Ought he not to go away this very afternoon and thus protect Christina from new slanders? No. Flight would be taken to mean that he had accepted the thin lady's advice, and the shrew was even capable of telling the chambermaid that he had run away from the attentions of Fräulein Rabe. The English couple were leaving themselves in twenty-four hours. They had said so. Till they were gone, he must stay, as Christina's champion. More than once as he hurried along he swung the little ax angrily in the air.

The Raven fluttered through the garden gate to meet him. Anna was upstairs.

"What have you in your hand?" Christina demanded. "You came down through the rocks like a young god with blinding lights shining round your head."

"It must have been the new blade of this ax flashing back the sunlight," said Harry, blushing in the manner she adored.



He was like Samson's riddle; as strong as a lion, as sweet as honey.

She took the ax from him. When he explained that it was far too small to use, and that he had bought it only as a souvenir she exclaimed eagerly: "Then give it to me! Dear little bright ax, poor little ax. Please, please Herr Harri, give it to me."

He gave it to her instantly, though not without a spasm of regret that he had missed his chance of frightening the man of the world almost out of his life with it. Never for a moment had he doubted this merry, clear-eyed, open-hearted girl's innocence; but as she played with the little ax like a child with a new toy, his heart grew hot with wrath against the man of the world and his bitter consort.

All through dinner, Christina nursed the ax in her lap. When Anna sought to take it away, she clutched it as a little girl clutches her doll at bed-time and would not be parted from it. Owing to further departures of guests, she no longer sat opposite to Harry who was now faced by a heavy hausfrau from Augsburg. As for the man and the woman of the world, they said nothing and thus gained some precious moments for consuming even more than usual of the good fare set before them.

The meal came to an end, but Christina was not allowed to abandon the rôle of a little girl. Anna dragged her off, still fondling the toy ax, to her room and to bed. It was the first time in Anna's memory that her mistress had got up at five in the morning and she saw signs of fatigue which called for treatment. Within half an hour the poor Raven, tired and happy, fell asleep.

When she came downstairs again, the house was already odorous with preparations for supper. To regain her appetite Christina walked out into the road. There she ran against Harry, in deep consultation with a towering peasant whom she recognized as the most famous guide in the valley. The

giant's voice was loud and she could not help hearing him say:

"Then six o'clock to-morrow, mein Herr, after the Mass."

Indignation flamed up in her heart. The next day was Saturday and Harry had said that he was leaving the village on Sunday afternoon. So she had fooled herself after all. He cared so little for her that his last day was to be spent miles away from her. What she had believed to be the firm beginning of a divine romance was to him only just one more of the chance meetings and passing acquaintanceships of tourist life. Her high and solemn visions in the church and at the waterfall were silly hallucinations, born of the intoxicating mountain air. In the sharp reaction from her mystic rapture she could almost have cried out to him that he was a booby and a churl.

The Angelus began to sound from the belfry close at hand. Instantly the guide, who had unfolded a map, stopped talking and uncovered his head. Harry did the same. For a second or two, Christina was on the verge of revolt against Heaven and all things heavenly: but grace was given to her and she bowed her head like the others. Before the bell ceased ringing she knew that her visions were not delusions. Harry's conduct might still be a mystery and an anguish: but all the same he was the only man she would ever love.

It occurred to her that he had probably arranged this big climb some days before and that, as he was not due in London for another fortnight, he would almost certainly postpone his departure from the inn. The burden rolled from her soul, she darted back into the house, leapt upstairs and panted to Anna:

"Last night I wore my wine-colored dress with cream roses. To-night I shall wear crimson roses and my pale yellow muslin. There are crimson roses in this bouquet which Herr Fecht has brought me. Quick, Anna, quick."

Although they were yards apart at the supper-table, Chris-

tina's clever eyes caught peeps of Harry now and then. She knew that he looked at her again and again and she was satisfied. The persuasion that the crisis in her life had come, and that she would never tread the stage again, had become absolute. Moreover, as she nursed the ax, his gift, in her lap she suddenly formed a plan—a daring plan which should turn his unfaithfulness on the morrow to good account.

When Herr Fecht desired to conduct her to the salon after supper, for another recital of music, the beauty surprised him by a refusal. “In Vienna,” she said merrily, “I am a raven, a night-bird. Here, on my holiday, I am a lark. This morning I rose with the sun and I want to do it again to-morrow. Dear Herr Doctor, excuse me. You shall have plenty of music from our genius, our Englischman.”

Harry was waiting near. She cried out gaily, “Good-night, Herr Harri,” and ran upstairs.

## CHAPTER IV

CHRISTINA'S instinct, next morning, was to hear Mass from the darkest corner of the church, unseen by Harry. Her new plan, however, required that she should renounce conventional coyness: so she went forward once more to a front prie-dieu. Kneeling there, her revelations were renewed, with a solemn addition. She became sure that her mysterious union with Harry was near, very near at hand, and that she would not see even one more of the old, light-hearted, careless days. At first this certainty chilled and shadowed her: but forebodings vanished as she stood up for the last Gospel and calm happiness came in their stead. The instant Mass was finished she hastened back to the inn.

This morning there was to be no leisurely breakfast in the garden. Anna had forbidden it, and it was unlikely that Harry would have time for it. Perhaps to-morrow morning— But no, she could not picture to-morrow. To-day rose up before her like a mountain rampart, shutting away all the tracts beyond.

Harry Coggin had not lost his Bulford habit of eating a good breakfast when it came his way. A looker-on, watching his prowess with the chocolate and milk, the butter and rye-bread, the cold veal and ham, would not have found it easy to regard him as the central figure of a romance. Still less would Harry have seen himself in that light. Although the Raven kept perking into his mind, making him feel yet again that it would be pleasant if he could be in two places at once, his thoughts were mainly bent towards the coming climb. He had persuaded the guide to pilot him up an arête which was sel-



dom attempted, an ascent which only the very tough and the very agile could contemplate.

He stepped out into the road a few minutes before six. A moment afterwards Christina emerged from the garden gate, a little lower down. Having seen her at church, he was not greatly surprised to encounter her again. Then it flashed upon him that perhaps she was graciously intending to invite him once more to an open-air breakfast. He hurried forward to excuse himself and to explain.

"You are not asked," she retorted, before his speech was fairly begun. "Do you think I have nothing better to do with my mornings than sit over coffee-cups with Englishmen? Anna is taking my coffee upstairs. You are conceited, Herr Harri. You imagine nobody can climb mountains except yourself."

She rounded off this rejoinder by deftly swinging round her head the ax, which she had been hiding behind her back. The gesture brought all her limbs into play and then Harry noticed the dress she was wearing. From the pout which pursed her lips he saw that she was vexed with him for not having remarked upon it with his first breath of greeting.

Except with her two marvelous toilettes of the two preceding evenings, the wine-colored and the pale yellow, Fräulein Rabe had not once appeared in the hoops or crinolines which had been so long in fashion. Sensitive to a change of mode which had already begun to show itself in Vienna, she preferred to wear far less voluminous and far more graceful garments. Her skirts were not the least of her sins in the eyes of the thin Englishwoman. This morning, however, she had renounced the fashion entirely and was arrayed like a Tyrolese peasant-girl. Her high-waisted dress and pointed hat and pretty stockings were of finer material than the village-lasses could or would have purchased, but the cut and hang were the same.

Henry Coggin ought to have been reminded by this charming sight of the highland maidens he had seen on the preceding Tuesday night at the Assumption dance; but he remembered nothing of the kind. His thoughts leapt back not to a scented pine-wood with two fiddles and a guitar squeaking and thrumming a country dance but to a stuffy opera-house, overfilled with the loud music of an orchestra playing *prestissimo* and *fortissimo*. As Christina balanced herself coquettishly on her dainty toes and swung the impracticable ax like a theatrical property, Harry could almost sniff the gas-fumes, he could almost hear the shrill violin and the pounding drums, while canvas mountains and painted trees seemed to rise up a few feet behind Christina's graceful and unrustic form. Her pirouette was all unconscious, but she was an actress bred and born.

"You think I look a fright?" she said. "No, no, poor Englishman, don't try to pay me compliments. You are not used to it. You would hurt yourself. Besides, what do I care how I look? When one goes climbing high mountains one doesn't wear a ball-dress."

Harry took alarm. To conduct a healthy, hardy, hoopless young lady to the Wasserblase was one thing; to haul her up precipices was another. He glanced at her tiny feet, a dancer's feet hardly bigger than two brown mice, and thought of the crampons the guide would bring. He thought of ugly gauze over those violet eyes. Then his mind swung right round and began to work furiously. After all, he was not bound to carry out his ambitious and perhaps selfish plan of driving a guide up the most exhausting and perilous ascent in that part of the Tyrol. It was true, that, after making preparations and announcing their intentions, the guide might feel aggrieved if the expedition were abandoned: but the man would have his hire just the same and could put the blame on Harry's fickleness or timidity. Yes. It would be best to

drop heroics and to enjoy himself temperately, like other people. He could keep the guide for some much nearer and much easier mountain; a mountain so near and so easy that even a little lady, with little feet and a little ax, would be able to endure its little fatigues and little dangers.

Christina divined the working of his thoughts. And, skilled actress though she was, she could not conceal her own hope and fear. The actress died out of her and only the love-hungry, lonely maid was left. Her eyes pleaded: "Why do you not tell me that you will not go away to-morrow? Why could you think for one moment of leaving me to-day? When your mind is so fine and your soul is so noble, how can your heart be so hard and your blood so cold? How can you, a poet, a gentleman, shame me and humble me by making me run after you? You have just prayed, and I have just prayed, to the same God. You know He has made us one for another. You are cruel, you are unfair. If I could spare one moment from loving you, I should use it to hate you."

Harry, even Harry, could not fail to see that the violet eyes were brimming with some passionate longing, some desperate entreaty. But he was too dull and too humble to have the faintest suspicion that he, the rag-and-bone man's vagrant, inelegant, tongue-tied son, could ever excite in this brilliant and famous young beauty anything more than a slight and passing interest. None the less, those pleading eyes searched his very heart until they brought to memory a small tragedy of his boyhood, long ago enacted and long ago forgotten.

Nearly twenty years before, when he was a child of six, he toddled with his glum father on some mean hunt for odds-and-ends. In the back-yard of a great house he waited shyly while his father's querulous tones waged a losing battle against the sharp scorn of the cook. As he hung about near a high black door which hid from him the glories of the flower-garden he heard a light scrambling and scuffling and a scratching of the

wood, followed by a soft and pretty cry. Glancing up he saw that a magnificent young cat, grandly marked like a tiger, was balancing herself on the top of the door, with her splendid tail aloft in the air. Little Harry, who had never fondled dog or cat or bird, never known brother or sister or playmate, became all eyes. He watched the queenly creature's ivory claws working in and out of her wooden perch. The animal gave another low cry, and jumped down into the yard. With her tail still aloft she pressed against the child's legs, humped herself small, arched her back, purred like a singing kettle and then looked up at him with great round eyes, demanding a caress. Giving way to an affectionate instinct which had not, at that time, been quite cuffed and scolded out of him, little Harry stooped and took the soft, proud, happy creature into his gentle arms. Instantly there was a scream from the back-kitchen door. The yard seemed to fill with a flood of print dresses and white aprons. He felt his father's heavy palm fall angrily on his ear and he heard himself called a dirty brat and an impudent little varmint. He was hustled and flung forth, while hands not so clean as his own tore the polluted cat from his disgusting clasp and bore it back to its mistress.

Face to face with Christina, it was only the first part of this childish experience that Harry remembered. The blows and the abuse hardly figured in his recollection, because they had been so large a part of his boyhood that they were not noteworthy events. What came back to him, with the utmost vividness, was the impulse he had obeyed to take up the helpless, pleading, lovely, bright-eyed, velvet creature and to comfort it against his heart. Christina unconsciously kept moving her restless feet, so that she was all alive from head to toe with nervous feline grace. Not as to a beautiful woman exciting his passions, but as to a poor little child, with a toy in her hand, who moved his love and pity, Harry could have held



out both arms to this sad raven. He could have nestled the twittering bird in his warm shoulder saying "What is it that she wants, what is it I can do?"

Footsteps on the hard road made him turn round. The guide had just stepped out of the pine-wood, bringing a heavy burden for himself and a lighter one for Harry. At the sight of a short-skirted young lady with an ax, he frowned and said pointedly;

"If the worthy Fräulein permits it, we must start at once. Josef and Andreas, my two nephews, will meet us at the foot of the glaciers. They have gone on with the ropes and irons. There is no time to lose."

Harry was troubled. Glancing again at Christina he saw that her eyes were pleading more ardently than ever. He still believed that she was intent on mountaineering and not on a mountaineer. He took it that, having shown the day before at the Bubble that she had a sure foot, a strong nerve and a cool head, she was determined to prove that she could do all a man could do, even to the extent of hacking hard ice and dragging herself up jagged chimneys. What was he to do? To take her with him would be unthinkable madness. Yet to turn his back upon her and leave her to spend a long day nursing her chagrin and disappointment would be unmannerly ingratitude after all her graciousness. It would be selfish and unkind. He was on the point of turning to the guide and of requesting an entirely new program suited to the physical powers of a lady, when the hand of fate struck home and struck hard.

In this particular instance the hand of fate was not a pretty hand. It was a skinny hand, a sinister hand, a hand which opened and closed up again like a pale and huge and dreadful spider. To be exact, it was the hand of the scraggy Englishwoman. Her bedroom window commanded the road, and she had heard Christina's voice. Although she showed

a hand and nothing more as she softly opened the window, Harry's quick eye caught the danger. In disgust and anger he watched the hand fumbling the blind to make a peephole.

Christina's desperate gaze followed Harry's until she too saw the hand. She flushed scarlet. To run after her beloved and humble herself before him had been an experience fraught with bitter-sweet excitement. In elaborating her plan she had silenced prudish qualms by imagining the hour of shy pride in which she would some day confess it. The Raven was resolved that when she and Harry were all in all to one another she would tease him, she would tell him how nearly he had lost her by his thick-headedness, she would archly brand herself a brazen hussy; and this match of wits outside the inn door on a chilly morning would live in their fond memories among the warmest of their lovers' secrets. But to find that another woman was looking on, that another woman was exulting in her difficulties and preparing to wither her with scorn for making herself so cheap with a man . . . it was too much.

The church clock began to strike six and the guide said again: "There's no time to lose."

"Then stop losing it," cried Christina. She spoke loudly so that her words should fly full into the upper window. "Shoulder arms. Quick march. Not that I believe you ever do really climb those high mountains. I believe you just sit down and eat and drink and smoke and talk when you're half way up. Who's to contradict you when you come home and say you've been to the top? I don't pretend I'm going to climb Mont Blanc myself; but there are more mountaineers than one in the world."

With the unseen but undeniable Englishwoman skulking behind the blind, Christina felt that she had an audience and all her skill as an actress came into play. The poor little heart was an inferno of shame and bewilderment and despair,

but the bright voice caroled like a black-bird's. She seemed to be careless of everything and everybody, a happy child bursting with high spirits. Once more she swung the ax round her head.

"If you are the other mountaineer, Fräulein, you must n't go climbing without a guide," said Coggin anxiously. "They say that a good guide for beginners is Franz Steinmann, the carpenter, near the bridge."

"Thank you," retorted the Raven with glittering disdain. "But you forget that you never saw this valley till a week ago and that I have been coming here for my Sommerfrisch year after year. I know where to find guides. But at this moment I am more intent on finding my coffee. It is waiting for me and getting cold upstairs. You think ladies are a nuisance, so I will go. You see, you 've no time to lose."

She hurried away. The moment her back was turned on Harry she could dissemble no longer. Scalding tears filled her eyes and her bursting heart seemed to rise in her throat and stifle her. Harry's impulse was to leap after her and to say: "No, no. Have your coffee and then we will spend a long wonderful day together." But he was still under the malign spell of the skinny hand. He knew that the salon and the speisensaal were in such disorder that if he followed Christina into the house for a thorough understanding he would have to mount the stairs. He stood stock still watching the Raven enter the doorway. While he watched he was aware, like a numb-witted prisoner submitting to the shackles, of the guide attaching a load to his shoulders.

Anna asked no questions and made no remarks. She poured out the coffee, which Christina drank eagerly, and buttered a slice of bread which remained uneaten. Thinking her thoughts she descended the stairs for her own breakfast.

Christina sat gazing steadily at the little ax on her lap.

Harri would come back. He had run away not from her, from Christina, from his bride, but from the hateful old Englishwoman. In a little while he would return and they would set forth on a glorious mountain ramble, with no fishy eye or skinny hand or sneering lip to vex them. But when the clock struck seven she awoke from her dream.

At the end of the corridor there was a window looking up the valley. Christina hurried to it and peered out. Against the dead white of the lower snowfield she could see four moving objects, like black ants, pushing and wriggling upwards . . .

Throughout that long August day Henry Coggin's mind was kept fixed, nearly all the time, on the tough business of the climb. In boyhood he had often been told to use his head to save his heels: but never before had he taken the proverb so seriously. Every step, every halt for breath, brought his brains as well as his muscles into play. The feat he was attempting involved climbing almost all the time, with hardly any interludes of walking. Wistful thoughts of the Raven were not to be expected of a man with precipices yawning under his feet.

If it had been suddenly revealed to the mountaineer that one of Europe's famous beauties was madly and hopelessly in love with him and that this beauty was none other than Vienna's adored Raven, all Harry's coolness would not have saved him from missing his step and tumbling headlong into an abyss. But no suspicion of Christina's longing and misery blinked into his innocent soul. Twice or thrice, when the guide found places where they could rest and eat, his mind rushed back to the inn. What was she doing? Was she having a dull day? Would the Englishwoman dare to scorn her?

Harry decided that he would not leave the inn on the morrow. He had a clear fortnight and surely he could spend a week of it in these mountains to better profit than in Brus-



sels and Antwerp and Ghent and Bruges which he had intended to see on the way home. Belgium was so near England that he could visit it any time, but it might be years before he could again fare so far afield as the Tyrol.

Despite his humility and innocence, Harry could not wholly conceal from himself the fact that it was a lady who was working these changes in his plans. Nothing, however, was further from his consciousness than an affair of the heart. At Amsterdam, in the person of young Huntly-Martin; on the Moselle, where the Freiherr had made him manage the races; at Laach and in Cologne, in the Black Forest, at Jena, at Ulm, at Munich, at Pest, where monks, students, professors, musicians, statesmen and even a king had discoursed with him: in these and other places Henry Coggin's wanderings had thrown him against a multitude of interesting acquaintances. All of them had been men save Fräulein Rabe, and Harry was grateful to Providence for reserving the pleasantest meeting of all to the last.

A recollection of the hand in the blind made Harry smart a little as he sat munching his bread and cheese. Had he done right to talk with a young lady so early in the morning, seeing he already knew that unfriendly eyes had been cast upon her? After brief consideration he decided that he had not done wrong. The Englishwoman's interference was pure malice and jealousy. This passing but charming acquaintanceship had not been of his forcing. It had come about naturally, and when it was over he would remember it as the crown of his experiences. Indeed, it was all to the good. His was to be a musical career: and it would seem strange if, after more than a year in Germany, he should return to England without having made friends with a single operatic artist. To-morrow the Englishwoman and her husband would be gone. Perhaps he could sit with Christina in

church. Afterwards, she and he would sing and play. On Monday they . . .

The guide sounded the advance once more and an hour later they were breathing the thin air of the summit. With blinding peaks all around him, Harry listened to the long catalogue of spits and bergs and horns: but he could not help chuckling to himself all the time at the thought of meeting Christina at supper and of answering her airy gibe about climbers who said they had scaled heights when they had n't. By the way, would she wear a third wonderful dress? He thought he liked that wine-colored taffeta better than the yellow muslin. Perhaps to-night she would wear blue. She would look lovely in blue, with blue mountain-flowers, the color of her eyes.

## CHAPTER V

**A**FTER thirteen hours of crawling and humping and tugging and jumping and clutching and striding and dropping, Harry limped back into the inn. His feet seemed to belong to some other person, so uncertain was his control over them. Not only his clothes but his hands as well were stained and torn. His thigh-bones seemed to be no longer surrounded by flesh and blood but to be scraping in two masses of some strange substance, like a toothache made big and solid. The last mile down the well-made road tried him far more than any mile of his climb up the mountain. His mind ceased to work and he merely stumbled forward on those two sore and hobbling feet which some cripple had given him in exchange for his own.

The odors of a stewed chamois greeted him in the doorway. Having caught sight of Lena disappearing with a large dish into the speisezimmer he knew that supper had begun. The place seemed strangely quiet but he explained this impression by his own utter fatigue. Forcing himself upstairs he was about to fling himself on the bed: but his inextinguishable conscience and his iron will came to the rescue. His wits were working just enough to remind him of the early morning encounter with Christina. He knew that if he rested for a single minute he would sleep until the morrow's dawn. With a tremendous effort he tore off his clothes, splashed himself in icy water, rubbed down his aching body with a rough towel, and vested himself in a presentable suit. Then he clumped downstairs. He decided that, immediately after supper, he would politely ask Fräulein Rabe for the story of

her day's doings and that he would then make known his intention of staying longer in the village. If he could screw up courage he would very respectfully offer himself as her escort and guide for the remaining days of his sojourn among the mountains.

Harry turned the door-handle and entered the dining-room. He expected to be greeted with the usual jovial sforzando of welcome and congratulation and chaff, with Christina's silver laugh rippling like a dulcimer amidst the heavier outeries. But the room was almost silent; and as soon as the company realized his presence the silence became complete.

Startled into full consciousness, Harry glanced anxiously along the table. Two new guests had arrived. The scraggy Englishwoman and her spouse had departed and Christina's place was empty.

Harry sank into his chair with a feeling of utter desolation. She was gone. Perhaps back to Vienna. Perhaps to the sea which he had heard her say she longed for. Perhaps to some other mountain village. He knew not whither: but the Raven was flown. Never would he be able to repair her disappointment of the early morning; never to hear her chirp out the story of her day's doings; never to discover whether she had forgiven him: never to unbosom himself of the thousand things he needed still to tell her or ask her: never to see her again. Not once since his good horse Bay Rum had been sold from under him for money had he known such pangs of bereavement and remorse.

He had eaten only one morsel of the food placed before him when he became aware that everybody was looking at him. Harry blushed hotly. Then a frightful thought hit him hard. That lean, mean Englishwoman was gone; but no doubt she had let fly a Parthian arrow, empoisoned with some scandalous insinuation against himself and Christina Maria Rabe, which had caused the young lady to pack up in disgust



and amazement and to shake the dust of the village off her dainty feet without a moment's delay. This theory of her departure struck him so forcibly that Harry laid down his knife and fork with a bang and stared defiantly at the company, as if challenging each and all to breathe one word against his outraged friend.

The taut silence was snapped by Frau Helm, the buxom Augsburg lady, who suddenly made a gurgling sound and then burst into hysterical weeping. Her two nieces drew her out of her chair and supported her to the door. When Frau Helm was gone, Herr Fecht bent towards Coggin and said, very stiffly:

"We expected, mein Herr, that you would ask the whereabouts of Fräulein Rabe."

Whenever a fight began, Harry Coggin's humility and shyness left him. With equal stiffness he replied:

"I am not entitled to discuss the lady's movements: but I assume Fräulein Rabe has concluded her holiday and gone back to Vienna."

"Fräulein Rabe's luggage is in her room upstairs," retorted the Austrian sternly. "Fräulein Rabe's maid Anna is in the church, weeping and praying. Fräulein Rabe herself . . . well, the good God alone knows where she is. Fräulein Rabe is lost in the mountains."

Harry jumped clear of his chair and stood facing Herr Fecht across the table. "What is being done?" he demanded in tones like the notes of a bugle. "You are here eating and drinking. What is being done?"

Herr Fecht winced. He knew full well that although the catastrophe had overshadowed the meal with gloom it had not caused him to eat less than usual. The pleasures of the table were always too strong for him. In a chastened spirit he answered:

"Guides have searched all afternoon in vain. They have

tried the dogs, with no result whatever. Search parties are out in all directions and will work till nightfall. But let me hasten to give you a message. Father Tobel wants to see you."

Three strides took Harry out of the long room. In the corridor he collided with Lena and asked almost roughly which was Father Tobel's door. Forthwith the narrow space became filled with women, all weeping. Harry had no inkling that these good elemental creatures had guessed Fräulein Rabe's secret, the secret which everybody knew by this time, save himself.

The parish priest motioned Harry into a horse-hair chair and disappeared into the dark passage which connected the presbytery with the church. He returned accompanied by Anna. The maid sought to transfix the young Englishman with a gaze of scorn and reproach, but the dart glanced off the armor of his innocence. Harry observed nothing beyond her hopeless anguish.

"You may be able to help us, mein Herr," said Father Tobel. Only a few months before he had renounced the habit of snuff-taking, after indulging in it for nearly forty years, and he still made involuntary motions towards a snuff-box which was no longer there. "Nobody appears to have spoken to Fräulein Rabe to-day except yourself and this good girl here, this poor Anna. I understand that the young lady conversed with you in the road, just after my Mass. She returned to her room, apparently troubled. About half-past seven she again entered the church, and stayed there until eight. Anna says that her mistress seemed by that time to have forgotten her trouble, whatever it may have been, and to have become even more happy and cheerful than usual. Lena, who watched her through the kitchen window, confirms this. The young lady then set out, very sensibly attired, declaring that she was going for a long walk and that she

might be late for mittagessen. She has not come back. Can you give me any information?"

Although this recital smashed to pieces his faint hope that Herr Fecht was exaggerating and pushed him down into still deeper anguish, Harry did not fail to perceive that the Raven's honor was to some extent in his care. Straightening his aching back, he looked the old priest full in the face, ceremoniously addressed him as *Hochwürden*, and said slowly:

"Yesterday Fräulein Rabe honored me with her company as far as the Wasserblase. To stand inside the cataract requires coolness and agility. Encouraged by her achievement, Fräulein Rabe possibly thought that even the roughest climb was within her powers. I fear she may have made some rash attempt. That is all I know."

Father Tobel fumbled again for the departed snuff-box. Recollecting himself, he gazed fixedly at Harry and then said gloomily, "H'm." He had been hoping against hope that a lovers' tiff was at the bottom of the mystery and that Christina was merely hiding until dusk to give her young milord a fright and a lesson. This faint hope was gone. Again he muttered "H'm," and began despising the Englishman for his heartlessness. At that moment, however, Harry's despair broke out like a wild sea through the suddenly shattered wall of his self-control.

"That is all I know," cried Harry, springing up and almost shouting. "Now let me go. In there, they are feasting. In here, we are talking. I am off. She must be found. She shall be found to-night, I swear it."

The priest moved quickly to the door and stood with his broad shoulders against it. The powerful frame of this peasant-bred old man, as well as his silver hairs and his sacred office, made Harry fall back. "Swear nothing, my son," he said. "We are in the hands of God. At any moment she may be brought back. She may have sprained an ankle

and she may be lying in some distant farm. Remember, most of the men-folk are away with the cattle, in the high pastures, and there would be few messengers to send. If no trace of her is found to-night . . . well, in the morning you shall help."

"The morning?" echoed Harry, stupefied. "But to-night, to-night? You cannot mean . . ."

"Yes, I mean that, my poor friend," answered the priest, deeply moved. "To be lost in the mountains is not a little thing. I mean that she may have to endure a night in the darkness, the cold, the solitude with nothing to help her save her prayers. I learn she always carries her beads. Let us hope she is saying them now, in misery perhaps, but in safety."

"It is outrageous, impossible," cried Harry, storming. "I will call back Josef and Andreas. Let me pass."

"My son," answered the old man sadly. "To-night I am in command. This is not your village. And it is not the first time, alas, that our glaciers and precipices have claimed forever some happy and careless traveler who had come to them for a few days of pleasure. We men of the mountains will not fail in our duty. Nobody has ever accused us of lacking bravery and humanity. If I should permit you to rush about in the dark we should have two tragedies instead of one. At the best, you would exhaust yourself and do no good: at the worst you would break your neck. Besides, I can see plainly that you are worn out already. Retire at once to rest, first praying your most earnest prayer for that frail sweet creature who is so dear to us all. I command you. Good-night, my son, and may God give you all the help you need."

Harry bowed his head. During the old man's exhortation his physical weariness had stolen back upon him, dragging down his eyelids, relaxing his muscles and causing drifts of hot mist to float across his perceptions so that he had to hurt



his eyes and brains in sorry efforts to make sure of the solid world once more. Through a haze he saw the curé light a bedroom candle. With somebody firmly holding and gently pushing him, he gained his room.

Had Tom remembered to rub down Bay Rum? What was the matter with St. Michael's clock? Why did it strike the hour in that thin, quick, poor way, without first chiming the four quarters? Where was the book he had been reading—the book about a mountain village and about a black-haired violet-eyed girl who swung a little ax? He must find the book somehow; because he had n't finished the story. If anybody had borrowed it or stolen it, how could he ever learn the end?

Harry awoke to find his candle still burning. It was down, however, to its last flickerings. He had just time to see that he had fallen upon the bed only half-undressed when the light went out.

It was a moonless night without wind, without stars. Nobody was stirring in the house. He might have been lying at the bottom of an abandoned coal-mine, so black was the darkness, so deep the silence.

For a few moments, memory still drowsed. Then it began to stir. A sense of some horror, near and dire and deathly, weighed on Harry's quickening consciousness. It was as if the impalpable darkness was gathering somehow into a hard and solid core, like a frightful idol of ebony in the heart of the night's blackness. He knew vaguely that he was pinned under a dank landslip of sorrow. Suddenly Memory opened her eyes wide and shrieked out her woe and fear. He remembered everything.

As if to fling the evil from him, he lurched clear of the bed-clothes and sprang to the floor. With all his wits about him he breasted the dreadful brunt of the truth. Somewhere on

the mountains, at that very moment, Christina was huddling and moaning, half-starved, half-frozen, perhaps wounded, without help, without hope. For hours and hours she must have cried out his name; and the fall of dumb and cold and black night, like a stealthy drift of sable snow, was the only answer.

He could do nothing. In darkness so profound that he failed to put his groping hand upon his box of matches, what could he even attempt? Despair seared him with her white-hot irons, mocked him in his ear, tore him with her scourge of thorns. He owned his defeat at last and crept back into bed. The aches in his thighs were worse than ever. And he was wildly hungry. Father Tobel, in bundling him up to bed, did not know that for supper Harry had eaten only one small disc of carrot from the stew of chamois. Further sleep was impossible. Yet he must lie for hours before dawn would set him on the path of rescue.

What was Christina doing now? The answer which rushed into his mind thrilled him with thankfulness. It was as if the full moon had swept night's velvet curtains aside and had filled every corner of the room with her soft silvern splendors. Christina, he felt sure, was not alone after all. She was praying, full of faith and hope. Had not the priest said that she carried her beads everywhere? Pitiful angels knelt around her, keeping fond watch and strong ward.

Under Harry's pillow lay a leather wallet containing his bank-notes and passport, his mother's silhouette, Edward Redding's long letter and the rosary which the Benedictine had given him in Cologne. He drew forth the rosary. Although the donor had taught him how to tell the beads and say the prayers, this pious exercise had never appealed to Harry, and he had vaguely agreed with those who regretted it as a pope-made excrescence upon true and simple Christianity. But, lying there in the darkness and crushing the beads

in his hot palm, he felt as if he had been divinely given a handful of pearls beyond price with which he could ransom Christina from the swart ogres of the mountains. If beads were good enough for Christina they were good enough for him.

When the fifteen decades were finished the darkness remained as black as ever and the ebony idol began once more to cast his foul spell. The idea came to Harry that he would storm Heaven by saying the whole rosary seven times in honor of the Seven Dolors. By fixing his mind on this holy task he was able to endure the remaining hours of the night. After each round of ardent prayers, he allowed himself to think of what he would do when Christina was found. He would postpone his return to England until the last possible moment. If she had sustained any injury, he would write to Edward Redding and would stay within reach of her until she could dance and sing and prattle as merrily as ever. He would wait on her, read to her, write music for her. But it still did not occur to him that he, Henry Coggin, son of William Coggin, rag-and-bone man, could ever be more to her than a very dutiful and grateful attendant, a chance acquaintance of travel, and perhaps a kindred spirit in music.

As he finished the last circle of Aves and opened his eyes, Harry could make out the square of the window. Day was breaking. Although it was too dark to dress, he rose and splashed and then rubbed himself smartly with strong oils until the aches in his legs gave place to aches in his arms. The light was still faint when he descended the stairs and joined a group of guides and peasants in the vaulted basement, where they had been spending the night. The remains of a rough breakfast lay upon the deal table. The coffee-jugs were empty and Harry got nothing save a chunk of black bread. Almost immediately the searchers repaired to the church, where Father Tobel celebrated Mass. Then they

broke into parties of four and set out, scattering in all directions according to some agreed plan.

Coggin's three companions were kind-hearted and high-minded men; but they had often ranged the country-side before in search of missing beasts or human beings, and it was not to be expected that their grief and anxiety should equal Harry's own. The conversation soon grated upon him. It turned mainly upon the fame of a certain cow who had fought a bull and beaten him. It appeared that this Amazonian creature was just then at grass in the upper pastures and was to be given a public welcome on her return to the village at Michaelmas. When Harry brought the talk round to the chances of finding Fräulein Rabe quickly, he soon regretted his interference: because the oldest of the three men proceeded to enlarge upon the vastness and wildness of the mountains and to describe all the worst accidents to mountaineers since his boyhood. He did not narrate a single instance of a missing person escaping without loss of life or limb.

When the sun was high Harry could stand the leisurely gait and the grisly chatter no longer. He asked to be told plainly whether his assistance was likely to be of much value; and, on receiving a very courteous intimation that it was not, he bade his companions farewell and picked his way towards a road which they pointed out to him. His nerves were giving way.

A tiny white building confronted him where the track and the road met. It was a wayside shrine. In honor of the Assumption pious hands had adorned a rude image of the Blessed Virgin with greenery and flowers. As he stood on the stone platform, leaning against the chapel and gazing down the sunlit valley, a sweet sound of bells drifted up to him from the village. For the first time, Harry realized that it was Sunday. A thousand miles away, in stuffy Bulford, St. Michael's grand bells were ringing too. In the gaunt Baptist



chapel, Pastor Clupp was stiffly giving out the first long hymn. Did God hearken to bells and hymns? Harry was on the point of revolt. But he rebuked himself sternly and went down upon his knees. Gazing through the grille at the poor cast-iron crucifix he repeated, almost mechanically, a little rhyme of his childhood, "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild." He added "Our Father," the prayer of Pastor Clupp and of St. Michael's rector and of the Pope of Rome alike. Then, growing bold again with God and with His Saints, he abandoned set forms of petition and poured out his whole soul in fervent entreaties of his own. He challenged high Heaven to work swift miracles and to lead him to Christina's side. Surely it could not be Heaven's will that she should be rescued by men who thought her less wonderful than a fighting cow.

In answer to his abundant prayers throughout the long night God had vouchsafed no assurance that the Raven would be found: but, as he rose from the warm stone sill of the chapel, he was given a supernatural confidence that before many hours had passed he would come upon her. This confidence restored his courage but not his happiness. He did not require illumination from heaven in order to know that, after such a day and such a night, Christina would not be the buoyant, bird-like creature who had tripped beside him from the Wasserblase. Perhaps he would find her lamed for life, or, worse still, bereft of reason. Harry strove to put away these thoughts. His business was to press on and to find her.

To the right of the road, about half a mile away, he identified the torrent which fed the Wasserblase, much further down the valley. Higher up rose a showy little summit known as the Cat's Head, by reason of two ear-shaped peaks with a grassy flat between them. As the Cat's Head looked near and easy to climb the guides had made a thorough examination

of it the evening before, believing that it was by far the most likely goal for Christina's rash adventure. Harry propped himself against a rock and tried to picture her movements. Although the guides had abandoned the Cat's Head theory, he felt sure it was the true one. Moreover the road on which he was standing was the Cat's Head road. He had reached a point about three miles above the village.

Harry imagined the lonely girl plodding up this rough and dusty road. On recalling to mind the view from the inn he perceived that the Cat's Head looked much more distant from this point than from the village, although it was really three miles nearer. Straining his ear he caught plainly the song of the torrent in its rock-strewn channel. He became persuaded that if Christina had indeed chosen this road she must soon have grown weary of it and that the sound of tumbling waters would certainly have lured her aside. He decided to hurry on and to keep a sharp eye open for a path leading off to the right.

Ten minutes later he found what he wanted. A faint but undeniable track struck off towards the straggling line of ragged trees which marked the course of the stream. Without hesitating a moment he followed this track. The conviction that he was on the right way became stronger than ever.

Half way to the torrent, the track skirted a mass of rock on the left. On the right the ground fell away as steeply as a wall into a long green hollow. This pretty precipice was less than fifteen feet deep, but the rock crowded the path so close to the brink that Harry winced at the thought of Christina balancing herself along it. Still, she was sure-footed. At the Wasserblase—

He came to a sharp halt. For a moment his heart as well as his feet stood still. There, at the bottom of the wall of rock, lay some scattered flowers, only half withered. They

were beyond all doubt flowers which somebody had gathered within the last twenty-four hours, and they had been either dropped or thrown away.

Harry sat down on the verge of the precipice and cautiously lowered himself to a projecting ledge from which he thought he could jump down into the gully. But no sooner had his heels struck the stone than it broke under his weight. He sprang clear and landed on soft ground while earth and knobs of loose rock were still slithering into the grass behind him.

The fading flowers lay a few yards to his left. On approaching them, he found that they too were partly buried under stones and loose earth. He scrutinized the wall of the gully and saw that a continuation of the same ledge had quite recently crumbled under some strain, probably the weight of a person trying to descend. Tingling with excitement he began searching for footprints. He found none: but on a flat stone he discovered a gash in the moss as if some sharp and heavy instrument had fallen upon it from a good height. Had Christina dropped her little ax and climbed down to retrieve it? He did not know. But of one thing he was sure. The person who had jumped or fallen from the path above could not possibly have climbed back again but must have sought egress lower down the gully. He hastened on. The gully wound like a dry watercourse between very steep sides and at the first bend the ground was muddy. He hunted about and came upon a footprint at last. It was a small footprint. It was hers.

Henry Coggin raced forward like a hare. But it flashed upon him that it would be indelicate and even dangerous to burst upon her without warning. He pulled up. It would be best to call out her name. Perhaps she would answer. But in any event she would hear him in this noonday stillness and would be prepared.

The spot where Harry had come to a stop was a tiny amphi-

theater, like the bottom of a funnel, with the vaster amphitheater of the mountains encircling the enormous space above it. Harry drew in a long breath and was about to call "Fräulein Rabe" when it struck him that these everlasting solitudes were not the place for Frau, or Fräulein, for Herr, or Monsieur or Miss. Taking courage he cried in tones as firm and clear as a trumpet of brass, "Christina: Christina: Christina Maria!"

He did not know that the most wonderful echo in the Tyrol could be heard from the place where he stood; and though his was a stout heart he was terror-struck when a Babel of sharp voices took up the chorus, shouting "Christina, Christina Maria." When they ceased, gruffer voices called gravely "Christina Maria." It was as if the shrill goddesses and grim gods of eld were bidding a soul to judgment. Then, after a silence, one kinder voice which seemed to speak from far behind the mountains, from the furthest edge of the world, said clearly "Maria": and once more all was still.

Perhaps she had heard: but she had not answered.

Almost on tip-toe Harry stole forward. He resolved, at the first sight of her, to roll some stones, to break some twigs or to hail her very softly. The gully turned sharply to the left: and, before he reached the bend, Harry could see from the dip of the rocks ahead of him, that it ran steeply down as well. He gained the brow of the slope and saw a sight which made him leap for joy.

Just below him the gully seemed to end in a round pit, walled by perpendicular cliffs and carpeted with short grass, as fine and level as a lawn. On the far side of this rotunda yawned a shallow cave or alcove, niched about five feet deep in the rock. Under this arch, protected from sun and rain, knelt Christina.

Harry's loud shout of a few minutes before had not carried far enough to arouse her. Christina was kneeling with her



forehead pressed against the cool stone. Her arms were outstretched so that she could support herself by gripping the knobby surface of the rock with both hands. She had unbound her magnificent black hair and it streamed over her left shoulder until it reached the ground whereon she knelt. From a projection on the innermost wall of the niche hung Christina's beads—the rosary which Father Tobel had declared to be her constant companion. It was arranged so that the five and fifty beads traced the shape of a heart, while the tiny crucifix drooped from the center. As if to form a homely altar, two colored pictures, smaller than ordinary playing-cards, had been placed beneath the crucifix on a narrow ledge, with bits of stone leaning against their edges so that the wind should not puff them away.

Although he could have shouted and jumped for gladness, Harry made a tremendous effort and controlled himself. Never before had he been in the presence of a lady with loosened tresses, and his super-abundant delicacy bade him find some means of awakening Christina and of letting her know that help was near. Then she would be able to re-bind her hair, to re-glove her hands and to meet him with no hurt to her modesty and pride.

Harry Coggin could not devise a plan. There were no dry twigs to break, no loose stones to set rolling. Pondering hard, he kept his gaze on the sweet scene before him. As he was standing on a height, the two religious pictures were almost level with his eyes and he recognized them as the little prints with "For Christina" written on their backs, which he had seen in the Raven's prayer-book.

A sigh of wind, eddying lightly round the narrow hollow, ruffled the kneeling girl's long hair and made the hanging rosary swing back and forth. Harry could hear the little crucifix tapping against the rock. Suddenly, as if in obedience to that silvery tinkling, the sun lifted his golden shield above

the broken rim of the pit and drove home his glittering spear full into the shadow of the alcove. The crucifix shone as if it had been cut out of a single rock-crystal, and the cheap gilt backgrounds of the little pictures glowed like the precious metal in a Russian ikon. Christina's raven-black hair became more than ever glorious in the sparkling light.

Then, without a moment's warning, the glittering spear glanced back and pierced Henry Coggin's heart. As the jagged, white-hot blade thrust at his very marrow, instantly he knew all the truth. In the harsh light he had seen her right hand, her poor right hand, her dead right hand.

Two long leaps and a few stumbling strides carried him down the slope and across the grass. He fell on his knees beside her. More than once during his hapless childhood, Harry had been taken by his witless and unimaginative father to help in the frightful task of the undertaker. Harry's own arms had laid the worn body of his mother in the oaken casket which his own reverent hands had made. Therefore he knew well the awful mien of death.

Christina's eyes were raised towards the chiming, shining crucifix and her smile was like the smile of Stephen, in the painted window at St. Michael's—the smile of Stephen when he “saw the heavens opened and the Lord Jesus.” But the memory of the old window at Bulford and of Blessed Stephen's ecstasy had hardly arisen in Harry's mind when it was shattered to pieces, like stained glass shivered by the hand of an angry giant, and through the ruin another memory showed clear.

As plainly as if it had been hanging on the mossy wall beside him, Harry beheld a picture, a steel engraving, which had adorned his strange dining-room in Bulford. It portrayed Romeo kneeling beside the supposed corpse of Juliet in the burial vault of the Capulets. For one long breathless moment Harry believed that he had been mistaken and that

Christina still lived. Yes. Christina was alive, just as Juliet was alive, despite the horrors of the charnel-house, despite her lover's despair. So vivid was his recollection that Harry saw again before his eyes the lines of Shakespeare which had faced him a thousand times, under the engraving, and a voice seemed to be declaiming:

Death that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath  
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:  
Thou art not conquer'd: beauty's ensign yet  
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,  
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.

Romeo believed Juliet dead and he was wrong. Christina was not dead. It could not be that Christina was dead. Juliet was only in a trance. Christina was only in a trance. Fatigue, hunger, thirst, terror had utterly exhausted her.

Not knowing that he did so, Harry threw a protecting arm around the slender waist. Christina's shapely arms and white little hands slid slowly down the front of her altar and she sank against Harry's breast, like a weary, happy bride. A thrill of wind flung her hair about his shoulder. Her cold forehead touched his burning cheek.

At that soft touch of Death's chill hand, something snapped in the soul of Harry Coggin. His iron restraint, forged through long years of sorrow, flicked into nothingness like a shred of cotton flung into a furnace. From his dry lips and from his breaking heart there went up a bitter cry, as of one defeated and sore stricken and forsaken. He cried:

"My God, my God. I am too late, too late!"

Sharply and quickly, as if in their hate-parched hearts they had been longing for this hour, the demons of the mountains cried back:

"Too late, too late!"

A moment after, the gruffer and baser fiends took up the

tale, muttering and chuckling "Too late, too late." And last of all, one pitiful voice, ever so far away but as clear as a silver trumpet, blew the awful tidings from the dizzy edge of this world, across the gulfs of space to the loving spirits on some more blessed orb, sadly calling "Too late."

When Harry came to himself he was still kneeling against the side of the cave with Christina in his arms. The sense of duty once more became supreme within him. Suppressing all emotion, he fixed his mind wholly upon what he ought to do. Surely the proper course was to lay the lifeless body reverently upon the grass, to cover it with his coat, and to speed back to the presbytery for help.

Very gently he rose to his feet, raising Christina with him. She had been dead only a few hours. There was a sweet spot just behind him, a dry stretch of clean turf where the sun's rays would not strike again until the morrow. There, in cool shadow, with a giant rock for monument, he decided to deck her bier.

Yet . . . when he looked up at the blinding mountains and the unpitying sky, at the death-moist crags and the crooning pine-woods, he knew that he could not leave her behind. It was in vain for faith and reason to remind him that Christina's soul had fled and that the frail burden in his arms was not his sweet, bright, beautiful, brave, rare friend. No. It was unthinkable. He could not leave her behind. Harry slid his right hand under the still pliant knees, and, with his left arm still clasping her waist and her head still resting against his shoulder, he looked about for the way of egress which he knew would be found. But as he took his first step forward he nearly stumbled against something hard, which moved and clattered.

It was the little ax. Christina had laid it in front of her altar and must have been kneeling almost upon it. Harry



noticed that the edge of the blade was dented, and he was filled with loathing for this foolish and fatal toy which he had given her in a most evil hour. With her white neck and beautiful throat just below his eyes, he could not help shuddering as if he had trodden upon the ax of an executioner. As it was impossible to stoop down and pick up the hateful thing he had an itch to punt it along in front of him with his toes until he could kick it into some crevasse where the blade would rust and the handle would rot, out of sight and out of mind. But he remembered that Christina had loved this little ax; so he stepped over it and passed on.

In a fold of the rocks Coggin discovered a narrower but much deeper cave. At a hasty glance it seemed to burrow into hopeless darkness; but he entered it boldly. At the first bend he saw before him daylight and heard a faint rumbling of water. There was barely room for himself and his precious load, and sometimes he had to gather Christina more closely to his breast and bow his head until his cheek touched hers.

The chill tunnel opened into the higher valley of the Wasserblase. A few paces away, the flashing waters poured themselves from a high ledge of rock into a deep pool. Trees were gathered together in surprising variety: the juniper and the oak, the beech and the mountain ash, the willow and the rhododendron, with a dense pine-wood on the further bank. The patches of close-cropped grass were gay with Alpine flowers, more gaudy than jewels in the hot sunshine.

Descending very carefully to the water's brink, Harry's quick wits told him that if only he could ford the stream and penetrate the belt of woodland he must certainly reach a good track down to the village, which he had noted some days before. But the pool was too deep, and the climb to the brow of the cascade too steep, while the rapids below were too

eager. Wholly baffled, he began descending the ravine. Soon he came to a spot where a lower waterfall splashed into a longer and shallower pool, and he decided that it would be safe to stride from boulder to boulder to the other side.

In mid-stream Harry paused. The next stride would be almost a leap and the channel which divided him from the great stone beyond was so profound that he could not see the bottom. To gather strength and breath it was necessary to halt and rest. A welcome cloud hid the sun and shielded him from the blaze.

He gazed down into the pool. Thereabouts the surface was as smooth as a looking-glass, and the reflections were of life-like solidity and brilliancy. Inverted in the flawless mirror he beheld a wiry, brawny youth carrying and clasping in his arms a milk-white beauty whose raven-black tresses rippled in the light tides of summer air. And the memory of yet another picture captured his over-wrought brain. He recalled an engraving of Paul and Virginia which showed Virginia nestling in Paul's arms while he bore her from boulder to boulder across a mountain stream like this.

Just then the sunshine flamed out again and Harry Coggin espied a marvel. Deep down in the water, on Christina's reflected hand, there shone an intensely bright point of fire, no bigger than a star but brighter than a midsummer sun. Astonished exceedingly, Harry involuntarily strained still more closely to him the sweet body, which seemed to be only sleeping. He glanced at her left hand. On the fourth finger gleamed a ring, an engagement ring, a twist of gold clawing one large diamond.

Hot blood rushed to Harry's cheeks. Christina was betrothed. Christina had a lover. He marveled that he had not noticed the ring before. As she knelt in front of her altar, half hidden in her loosened hair, it was hardly surprising

that he had not seen it. Nor could he have observed it while she walked, neatly gloved, to the Wasserblase. But at dinner, at supper, at their open-air breakfast, at the piano . . .

Why had she not told him? Was it quite fair that she should have demanded to know whether he was affianced and not have breathed the lightest hint concerning her own betrothal? Harry felt so much resentment at her closeness that he was on the point of waking her and of asking, "Why didn't you tell me?" Then it came home to him, like a sharp and sickening pain beginning again after a brief respite, that he could not wake Christina and that she could never hear his voice again. He knew that he was carrying what was hideously called a dead body.

At that moment Henry Coggin rebelled against God. The heaviest strokes of divine chastisement, falling on his own shoulders and lacerating his own flesh, would not have drawn a murmur from his lips; but how could God, the just God, the loving God, have brought Himself to slay Christina, after a night of anguish, in the flower of her young life and love? He made haste to banish this presumptuous reproach against the All-Wise and All-Merciful; and instantly there broke over his dry heart a cooling, healing wave of hope and consolation.

The burden in his clasp might be a dead body; but Christina Rabe was not dead. Down there in the pool the tiny point of light burned more intensely than ever as the increasing glory of the sun focussed itself more and more greedily in the midst of her diamond, like a golden bee searching the heart of a white flower. Harry stared down into the pool. The star-small, sun-bright point of white and sparkling fire shone up at him from the depths. He knew that, while he watched, the swift smooth ice-cold flood distilled from the high mountain snows was pushing over and under and around that tiny white fire. Yet it burned on still. He breathed to

himself in deepest reverence the words of Holy Writ: "Many waters cannot quench love nor can the floods drown it." Like the flame of a fair white candle which falters and slips down from the frail wick into nothingness at the mere breath of the outside air, Christina's physical life had quailed and flickered out of her slender frame at the mere vastness of midnight on the mountains. Yet Harry knew that her love lived still. Its white radiance burned on serenely, and where the hurrying stream of Time chilled and darkened into the river of Death that unquenchable sun of Christina's love shone all the more proudly through the cold and gloom. Harry vaguely wondered how there could be any man found to doubt the immortality of the soul. If the Immortal God was Immortal Love, and if Christina, this love-bright Christina, was God's handiwork and God's child, how could she be other than immortal too?

A rush of pity swirled Harry's thoughts away from Christina's love to Christina's lover. What would he say, what would he do, when he heard the news? On this cloudless Sunday afternoon he did not even know that Christina was lost. Harry pictured the unknown lover as rich and noble, dashing and handsome and gay, like a splendid young cavalry officer whom he had watched careering on a superb white charger outside the Hofburg in Vienna. Perhaps, at this very moment, Christina's lover was seated at a table writing her a letter. Perhaps he was gazing at her picture. Perhaps he was pressing to his lips, like a lover in a poem or in a picture, a raven lock from these very tresses now crushed against Harry's cheek.

The broad mirror of deep water lay still unblurred at Harry's feet. Once more he took into his mind that Paul-and-Virginia picture of the white beauty nestling against the weather-tanned youth's shoulder. Suddenly he started and almost fell. Like a blow between the eyes, the knowledge



had come to him that he, in the unknown lover's place, was clasping Christina in his arms, encircling her waist, pressing her cheek against his own.

As if somebody had surprised him in a base act of treachery, he wrenched his gaze away from the accusing pool, and looked around him. But the waterfall hissed shame upon him and the brooding mountains stared at him with white and awful eyes. Harry Coggin turned to flee. A leaping stride bore him over the mid-most channel and a few moments later he plunged into the decent shade of the kindly pine-wood.

That Sunday afternoon, as the faithful were chattering outside the church and the bell was jangling for Vespers, a child shrieked out "Look." Straightway there broke forth a confusion of cries: "She's found!" "It's the Englishman." "Glory be to God." "She's saved, she's saved!"

Like a man on stilts, who takes longer and longer and quicker and quicker strides when he is about to fall, Harry came down the steep road at a pace so astonishing that nobody ran forward to help him. The able-bodied men were, without one exception, still beating the mountains, but the children and women and graybeards made a large crowd, because those who could not search had come to pray. With increasing heartiness of gratitude to the Almighty they multiplied their pious exclamations.

What they saw was a sight which might almost have loosened the tongues of the dumb. They saw a youth bearing down upon them with strides of a demi-god. Bare-headed and with eyes which flashed like an archangel's he came grandly on. In his embrace they saw a pale maiden, swooning perhaps, with wonderful black hair streaming backward in the breeze. By that time all the valley had come to believe that the young English mountaineer and the beautiful Viennese actress were lovers whom some foolish quarrel had briefly

estranged; and even the least romantic beholder felt a lump in the throat and a mist in the eyes as the wilful maid was borne home hiding her face against the youth's strong breast. They did not know that they were looking at a man who had eaten nothing save a thin wafer of carrot and a small knob of bread for twenty-four hours; at a man who had climbed a dizzy and perilous peak the day before and had endured a night of torture; at a man whose hands were pricking and burning as if he had been stung by giant nettles, whose brow was streaming with sweat, whose arms seemed about to snap like dry sticks, whose feet stumped like uncloven hoofs, whose heart was ready to burst and to drown his down-stumbled carcase in a scalding pool of his own blood. Nor did they know that they were looking also at a sweetly-clinging lady who had died without beholding that golden Sunday's dawn.

As Harry broke into their midst the people fell back, leaving a clear way right into the porch of the church. They had barely time to pity his long staggering strides, like the gait of a drunken man, when he was lost to sight. With one accord they streamed after him, along the short high nave, just as Father Tobel emerged from the sacristy and approached the high altar. At the same moment the village musicians in their wooden gallery, not knowing that anything strange had happened, began a solemn prelude. These humble Tyrolese who had learned, during the long nights of winter, to play their fiddles, their 'cello, their bassoon and their horn more than well, were assembled to adorn the Sunday within the Octave of the Assumption. As their music gushed forth like cool waters from the moss-grown conches of a Roman fountain Harry's trance was broken. He stopped and stared around him desperately. Then his iron will and his mighty strength went utterly from him. He lurched forward and was about to fall. But in that full-fraught moment the truth had flamed upon the people. Shoulders, arms, hands were all

around Henry Coggin: and when he fainted clean away the strong, clever, gentle women had already drawn Christina from his yielding clasp.

Thus it came to pass that Fräulein Rabe, who had always been denied her darling wish to sing just once in a tragic opera, lay quietly before a marble altar, with the priest of God in vestments of white and gold bending over her, with violin lilting and throbbing in the perfumed air, and with her well-beloved lying at her side.

## CHAPTER VI

**N**EXT morning, when Lena softly opened the Englishman's door to make sure that he had not died of strain and grief, a swish of cold water smacked her in the face and she retreated in modest confusion without Harry knowing that anybody had entered the room. He had slept like a log and was now as hungry as a lion. The aches in his arms and thighs were terrible and his feet still seemed to be most painfully estranged from the rest of his body. But he did not, on awakening and while splashing himself with icy water, experience mental or spiritual anguish. Christina was dead, like Isolda and Cleopatra, romantically dead, tragically dead. It seemed, however, that her life and her death belonged to very long ago.

Harry hobbled downstairs and would have sought the usual bread and coffee in the usual room if Father Tobel had not quietly taken his arm and led him into the presbytery proper. The priest lifted a tin cover and displayed a vast omelette, with many dice of ham embedded in its folds, which Anton had declared to be the famous English breakfast-dish called bacon-and-eggs. Alongside the omelette stood a silver teapot, with a straining-basket hung round the spout. Although the inn boasted its own little dairy, the old priest proudly poured out a cup of tea unclouded with milk or cream and Harry did not like to ask for either. The tea was delicate and revivifying, the enormous omelette did not prove too big and the toasted bread recalled Harry's breakfasts in that other pious house, the old chapel at Bulford. Indeed the



breakfasts in Bulford seemed much more recent than any of the meals Harry had eaten in the speisesaal of the inn next door.

While the kindly host was greatly relieved to see his guest eating and drinking so heartily, he could not help feeling that the boasted English coolness went too far. He would have hated a breakdown and a scene: but he had not expected heartlessness. He pushed a jar of honey towards Harry, who helped himself liberally. Suddenly, however, the young man dropped his spoon on his plate and asked very anxiously:

“Have I missed Mass?”

“Of course you have,” the priest answered. “Don’t you see I have been eating some of your English schinken-mit-eier?” Father Tobel spoke sharply; because callousness became hateful when it strutted arm-in-arm with piety. Then, remembering that his long life had not yet shown him every type of human nature, he added kindly: “You seem to have a great devotion to Holy Mass, my son. I think you have heard Mass every day since you came among us. Is it your regular practice?”

“Except in Old Prussia, where I could not always find a Catholic church, I have heard Mass every day for more than a year,” said Harry. He did not speak boastingly but with self-reproach for his indolence in rising from bed that day so late.

“I promise that to-morrow morning you shall be in time,” said Father Tobel. “I will wake you myself. My son, this is a suitable moment for a suggestion which I want to make—I might say a request, and almost a command. To-morrow morning will you not receive Holy Communion? And will you not offer your Communion for the poor soul of your friend whose mortal remains you bore hither from the mountains? I see you are a devout young man. For all I know you frequently approach the Sacraments. But if, from any

cause, you have neglected your duty I will hear your confession this morning."

To the old man's deep grief, Harry failed him with the expected "Yes." Indeed, the eyes into which the priest was gazing filled with so much perplexity and trouble that Father Tobel felt sure he had crashed through a thin shell of outward piety into an inward moral chaos. As a good physician of souls he faced his task and said most earnestly:

"If, in spite of your daily church-going, there is something in the way, something which keeps you back from the altar-rails, surely this is the time to be rid of it, this is the time to put yourself right with Almighty God. Has it not just been proved to you in the most terrible manner that Death is no respecter of Youth? For your own soul's sake, break this chain, here and now. But no. I will say rather for her sake. If she were here, asking you for bread to eat or asking for your arm to lean upon, would you refuse her? You can do no more for her body. But you can help her soul, her poor soul. Can you refuse to offer your communion for Christina Rabe's soul to-morrow?"

Father Tobel rose and leaned across the narrow table to lay a pleading hand on Harry's shoulder. He was prepared to see what he had seen more than once in that room before: to see the sinner bow his head, and to watch over him with loving prayer while the devil fought the last round with all his arts and all his might. No such thing happened. At the touch of the priest's hand, Henry Coggin sprang up and recoiled as if he had been detected in an imposture: and instead of uttering the expected "I cannot, I cannot" or "God helping me, I will," he said simply:

"I am not a Catholic."

Father Tobel's was a stolid nature, not easily annoyed and not easily surprised: but as soon as he had taken in Harry's answer it became plain that he was no less vexed than as-

tonished. With a strange little grunt, which he had learned from his peasant mother, he moved to the window and looked out. It displeased him extremely that he should have made such a mistake. Then, all of a sudden he ceased to feel angry with himself and began to be angry with Coggin. Turning half round he said rather sharply:

"I don't understand. I understand your English Protestants whose principles do not allow them to attend Catholic worship because they believe it to be superstitious and idolatrous. I understand your English unbelievers who are interested spectators of our religious services and customs, just as I myself might be interestd to witness the strange rites of some savage tribe in Africa or of some ancient race in Asia. But this case of yours, mein Herr . . . well, I don't understand it."

Harry did not answer: so the old man turned again to the window and stood with puckered brows. He subscribed to a theological review but did not often cut the leaves. Indeed he would have known almost nothing of current ecclesiastical controversies if it had not been that the bishop of the diocese was one of those gloomy prelates who love to usher in each succeeding Lent with a pastoral letter bewailing the deadly errors of the time. Father Tobel vaguely remembered that the episcopal cup of sorrow had once been filled fuller with bitterness by certain wilful Englishmen who taught that you could be anti-Protestant and anti-Papist, and truly Catholic at one and the same time. This old priest, however, was a plain man and he was determined not to split theological hairs with anybody. Returning to the table he said:

"This is not the time to argue about religion. I ask your pardon for my mistake. Seeing you so regularly at Mass I took you for a Catholic. Now, I have another request to make. Will you guide me to the spot where you found . . . the body? At present you are the only human being who

knows . . . where she died. You do not need to fear that I shall discuss religion on the road."

Although Harry's limbs still ached and his feet were very sore he was glad to have the chance of serving Father Tobel, so he answered that he could start at once.

Stoutly shod and grasping short ash-poles they were soon on their way up the valley. One more rainless day had nearly silenced the lesser brooks; but the torrent, fed from the white breasts of the snow-mountains, still crooned in Harry's ears. As they left the last farm behind, the priest, wishing to be companionable, said:

"Perhaps you will think it strange, but I have never been so high up the valley before. You see, I am mountain-bred and these deserts do not tempt me. When I go to Vienna I go to see the pictures and statues; but there are thousands of leisured people in Vienna who have never entered a museum or gallery in their lives. What we can see any day we are inclined never to see at all. I suppose it is the same in London."

"I have never been in London," said Harry quickly. He spoke the words out of his meticulous honesty and from a dread of being once more misunderstood: but they fell on Father Tobel's ears like a rebuff. With a shrug so slight that the Englishman did not notice it the benign old man merely gave up the attempt at conversation and did not speak again until they reached the boulder-strewn pool where Harry had paused the day before with Christina in his arms. Then, wondering greatly, he asked:

"How did you cross this deep and wide channel, here in the middle of the stream?"

"I cannot tell," Harry answered. He made a foot-bridge with the stout ash-poles and helped the priest over. And again they walked on, in silence.

After threading the dim tunnel above the torrent the two



climbers came out into the green cirque where Christina had spent her last hours. The crucifix of the rosary was still tapping the rock with each suck and sigh of the warm air, and the colored pictures were still on their ledges. Father Tobel, however, seemed to have eyes for nothing but the little ax. He seized it so eagerly that he seemed almost to have made the long journey for that little ax alone. Only after he had brightened the blade upon his black sleeve and had gazed long upon it did the priest enter the niche and take down the engravings and the beads.

Harry watched the rough hand plucking these pious objects like flowers from the face of the rock. Instantly he was overwhelmed by a sense of Christina's life and death. Until this moment his memory of yesterday's events had been lagging far behind his plain consciousness, like a great white ship veiled in the steam of the black tug which hauls it along. But, in the twinkling of an eye, to-day vanished. Only yesterday was true. All the past, the present and the future, all time and all eternity were summed up in that majestic, dolorous lovely hour. How could this narrow pit contain such a surging, urging tide of grandeur and mystery? Why did not its walls split asunder and crumble down?

When, holding the ax in his arms like a rescued child, the priest knelt with deepest reverence before Christina's altar, Harry's brief ecstasy ended. A dull anguish, as heavy as a mountain rolled and settled in its place. He was about to fall on his knees at Father Tobel's side, but shame restrained him. He, Henry Coggin, had no part and lot in this rough oratory, this blessed place of holy pictures and crucifixes and rosaries. He, Henry Coggin, was only a looker-on at the Catholic Church. The blacksmith's boy, Caspar, who ran errands for the inn and helped to clean the altar-candlesticks, could receive the Holy Communion to-morrow and offer It

for Christina Rabe's soul: but he, Henry Coggin, must say "I cannot."

In agony of mind and spirit, Harry kept step with Father Tobel down through the tunnel and back to the marge of the torrent. That he himself was outside the Church, that he might at any moment die tragically like Christina, that he might be damned for trifling with the most sacred of all things . . . these and the like thoughts did not enter his head. The sole fount of his anguish, a fount more cruel than scalding water and more bitter than gall, was the knowledge that, if only he had been a Catholic, he could still have done something for Christina.

In the midst of the pool, before facing the ash-pole foot-bridge, Father Tobel asked leave to sit down and rest. Harry too sat down, on the very boulder where he had beheld the reflection of the dead Virginia. And there it pleased the good God to bestow upon Henry Coggin a great grace.

Gazing a little down-stream Harry saw a place where the smoothly-sliding water was gashed open by some jagged rocks. Light clots of white spume, as big as butterflies, sprang into the air and sank back again into the torrent. Bubbling, creaming wavelets smacked the black rock and merrily played leap-frog with the wavelets that came after. All this they did to a cheerful music, as of hundreds of silver kettles singing on bright hearths.

Harry remembered the racing and chattering waters of the Skilbourne, near Bulford town—the sweet Skilbourne on whose banks, thirteen years before, he had found courage to demand Holy Baptism. And, as he recalled that sacred moment, a strange idea filled Harry's mind. He pictured the Skilbourne, on that May afternoon of long ago, splashing under the gray arch of the bridge and flashing through lush meadows to join the broad Deme. He pictured the Deme flowing tranquilly

onward until its cool, sweet flood mingled with the tumbling sea. He pictured the fierce sun of that wonderful May-time flaming upon the green waves until they yielded up thin veils of vapor to curtain the garish heavens. In his imagination he saw those high clouds brushed along by the west wind until they were caught and torn in the sharp ice-peaks of the glittering Alps. He saw them settling silently on the tops of the mountains like soft down from the wings of doves without number. He knew that some Alpine snows remained summer after summer unmelted. But these burning August noons were unchaining many an old snowdrift; and Harry, overwrought by fatigue and pain and sorrow, did not resist the fancy that the old waters of his baptism, after wide wanderings and long imprisonment, were at this very moment flowing under his eyes once more and filling his ears with a message which God Himself had whispered to them in the radiant silence of the dazzling heights. Their challenge was so clear and their voice so heavenly that his timidity vanished like a snowflake in a sunbeam. Moved by something mightier than his own will, he sprang to his feet and said loudly to the brooding priest:

“I want to be a Catholic.”

For several moments Father Tobel was too much astonished to answer. At last he uttered the one word:

“Why?”

“I want to be . . . what she was,” cried Harry desperately. He feared that he was about to be repelled. “I want to be like you and like the others. I want to receive Holy Communion to-morrow, for the first time in my life: and to offer It for her.”

The priest bowed his head over the ax which rested on his knees. There was a reason, known to himself alone, why Harry's words filled him with unspeakable thankfulness to God. But he soon remembered the obligations of his sacred

calling. Dwelling amidst an entirely Catholic population, he had only once in his life before received a convert into the Church. This Englishman was evidently a youth of exceptional temperament and the case was not an easy one. Father Tobel meditated for a long time. At last he said:

“My young friend, there are learned and holy men who would tell you that the mere desire to help, by offering a communion, some soul which has been dear to you, is not by itself a sufficient motive, a satisfactory disposition for your being reconciled to the Church. In a sense, they would be right. But at this solemn moment I look into your face, I hearken to your eager tones and I lift up my soul to Almighty God for guidance. It is the very essence of our holy faith that our Divine Lord thought not of Himself but of others—of us poor sinners. For a year you have been hearing Mass but you have evaded the great decision until now. In making this tremendous choice you are moved not so much by fear for your own soul but by truly Christlike love for the soul of another. I cannot find it in my heart to correct you. My son, my dear son, I can only bid you welcome and pray God to bless you. Suffer me to be silent while I thank God for a favor which to-morrow you shall understand . . . Let us go.”

When the roof of pine-boughs was again over their heads Father Tobel began to instruct Harry in the Catholic religion and was amazed at the extent and depth of the catechumen's knowledge. Not even on one point was Harry ignorant of sound doctrine. All that the young man lacked was ease of coördination—the Catholic sureness and swiftness in perceiving separate dogmas as living stones in one symmetrical temple of truth. Harry was like a man reading aloud an epic poem, with a complete understanding of the story and of the diction but with only a dim sense of the meter, of the light or heavy accents. The Catholic idiom came stiffly from his Puritan lips. The priest, however, knew that Rome is not learnt in a



day; and he took care not to clog and belittle Harry's first moments of faith by fussy corrections of trifles. And when he moved onward from theology to piety he marveled at the young man's hunger and thirst for the sacraments and for all things holy.

As they neared the village, Father Tobel asked: "Will your family or friends in England be angry at the step you are taking? Will it involve you in temporal loss?"

"I have no relations anywhere," Harry answered, "but I have a benefactor, to whom I owe almost everything. Without his aid I should, at this moment, be working hard in a small country town, without a friend, without prospects. My benefactor sent me to travel for fifteen months in Germany. He has some plan for my future but I have no idea what it may be. My turning Catholic may or may not upset it."

"Almighty God often tests and toughens converts by temporal trials," said the priest. "At least, so I have heard. If you should be in any sore strait, write to me. What I can do will be very little: but our Master will do the rest. My son, you move me strangely. Let me grasp your hand. I feel that God has some great work for you to do in the world."

Father Tobel was looking full into the young man's eyes as he spoke: and he suddenly beheld a new wonder. Harry's pensive and docile face was transfigured into an angel's. He towered higher and seemed, in a single moment, to have become more than mortal, as if the very Spirit of God wholly possessed him. In the presence of this ecstasy the priest stood still and feared. He did not know that far away, in green England, near an old town, there was a quiet spot called Yellowhammer Lane, strangely like the sheltered hollow where they were standing. He did not know that, fourteen years before, another clergyman had grasped this angelic youth's hand and had uttered almost the self-same words: "I feel that God has some great work for you to do in the world."

## CHAPTER VII

ON Tuesday, August 22nd, the day of his reception into the Church, Henry Coggin arose even earlier than usual. It had been arranged that the short ceremony should take place before Mass, in the chapel of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors, and that the convert should make his first Communion immediately afterwards.

Overnight Harry had packed his valise and completed his simple preparations for departure. Without giving a reason, Father Tobel had commanded that he should leave the inn, on the first stage of his journey back to England, after the mid-day meal.

Kneeling beside the bed in his tidy room, Harry awaited the promised knock at his door. The coming event filled him with awe. He whose humility had kept him back from claiming even the meanest place in the Church of England could hardly believe it possible that he would soon be admitted to full communion with the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church: that he would be of the same faith and the same fold as his patron saint, Mr. Redding: that he would be no longer a mere looker-on at the ineffable mysteries: that he would have as much right as the Pope himself to the holy sacraments.

Across this vast and overpowering prospect of lofty pillars and soaring roofs, the form of Christina flitted, at first no bigger than an elf's. But as Harry recalled the dead maiden's vigil before her crucifix and her pictures of saints, Mr. Redding's figure weakened and receded. To be one with Christina in faith and in the love and service of God became the

highest bliss. It was cold in this mountain bed-room, four thousand feet above the sea, and Harry shivered as he thought of the loneliness which awaited him in the empty church. How good it would have been to feel that Christina was kneeling somewhere near throughout this ordeal. How hearty would have been her joy in his conversion, how warm her hand-clasp, how bright her welcome. And yet, if Christina had not strayed into that chill cave of death amidst the mountains, he, Henry Coggin, would not now be awaiting Father Tobel's knock. Before he could feel the force of this new thought, the summons came. Harry opened the door and followed the priest down the dark stairs, along the narrow passage, through the sacristy and into the dim church. To reach the chapel of the Seven Dolors it was necessary to cross the nave. To his surprise the convert suddenly felt the priest's strong hand gripping him by the arm as if to thrust him past some danger or to prevent him from stumbling. Glancing to the left Harry saw that the nave was not empty, as he had pictured it. Supported on trestles and covered by a black-and-silver pall, a coffin stood within a fence of tall yellow candles. A few women knelt near it; and, as Harry stepped near them, one young girl broke into piteous weeping. He turned reverently aside from her grief. During his hundreds of early morning visits to Catholic churches, Harry had chanced many times upon a catafalque with its mourners. Obeying Father Tobel's imperious hand, he continued his journey and soon knelt beneath the image of the sword-pierced Virgin.

As his meager library boasted only a single copy of the "Forma Receptionis Neo-conversi," Father Tobel waived pomp and circumstance, to the extent of telling the Englishman, not in Latin but in the vernacular, to share the book by looking over his shoulder. Harry, indeed, acted as a kind of acolyte at his own conversion. He said the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* alternately with the priest, responded to the versicles

and uttered the Amens. Then, with his right hand upon the Holy Gospels, he made his Profession of Faith in a firm voice, with his whole heart and his whole mind. He joined in repeating the psalm *Miserere* with the utmost earnestness. But when Father Tobel made ready to administer conditional baptism, the neophyte recoiled. First in seemly Latin and then in persuasive German he made it plain that the validity of the sacrament which had been administered to him when he was fully twelve years old by a clergyman who immediately afterwards became a Catholic, did not admit of the faintest doubt. Satisfied though mystified, the priest gave way and solemnly pronounced the Absolution releasing Harry from the bands of excommunication which *forsan*, "perhaps" he had incurred. Then, bidding the convert follow him, Father Tobel moved along the nave and entered his confessional, where Harry was to make *confessionem integram peccatorum praeteritae vitae*, a complete confession of the sins of his past life.

Under this kindly confessor's wise guidance even a complete confession could not take long. Father Tobel simply placed before his penitent the Ten Commandments of the old Law and the New Commandments of the Gospel. And, as the young man answered each question promptly, clearly, humbly, the old man marveled and gave thanks to God. Here was a youth, rich and handsome and clever and strong, who had done God's will on earth as it is done in heaven, who had forgiven the many who had trespassed against him, who had overcome temptation, who had been delivered from evil. Not once in his life had this man lied; indeed so sheer was his truthfulness that it refused to compound with his humility. Not once had he taken God's name in vain, or borne false witness or coveted his neighbor's goods. He had honored his father and mother: but he confessed that sometimes, for a few moments, he had harbored against his father unfilial thoughts. Ever since he could remember he had gone on a



Sunday morning to worship His Maker as best he knew. Not once had the glowing lava of passion welled through the spring flowers of his chastity. He knelt there virgin, in body and in mind. Yet he had no idea that he was other than the chief of sinners: and when the confessor concluded by asking him whether he knew of any other sin, Henry Coggin accused himself sternly of pride and ambition; of having been too curious and extravagant in eating and drinking; of having spent time and money on ornamental arts and studies which he might have devoted to the sick and the poor.

Harry had heard that at the end of a confession the confessor immediately proceeded to counsel the penitent and, except in grave cases, to give absolution. But when he closed his recital there was a long silence. So complete was the young man's humility that he honestly believed he had deeply disappointed Father Tobel by his many sins and negligences and offenses: and he meekly bowed his head to receive the coming rebuke. As the silence lengthened he prepared himself to hear that he must not yet receive Holy Communion. He did not know that there was a lump in the confessor's throat which would not let him speak and that the old man behind the wooden grid was thanking God with his whole heart for the honor of receiving this manly, high-souled, unspotted saint into the Holy Church. At last Father Tobel spoke and said:

"My son, Almighty God has given you grace to make a good confession. You have spoken of ambition; but ambition can be laudable when our motive is not mere glory and power, and when we do not seek to enrich and enlarge ourselves at the expense of meeker and weaker brethren. You have spoken also of pride. In some fine natures there is a proper pride, no more to be blamed than the high spirit of the thoroughbred horse or the agility of the chamois. And there is, alas, another kind of pride, the pride of self-worship, or arrogance, of jealousy, of overweening dignity. Whenever you are

tempted to indulge this sinful kind of pride, hold before your eyes a crucifix. Ponder the crown of thorns and remind yourself that every moment of sinful pride adds one more thorn to that crown. The crucifix shows you God Himself, mocked, stripped, flogged, wounded, bleeding, thirsting, dying because of man's pride and self-will. Contemplate it constantly, attentively, fervently until you can say like Saint Paul that your old proud self is dead, crucified with Christ and dead.

"You spoke, my son, of your fondness for the pleasures of the table. Within due bounds there is no sin in this choosing and relishing your dinner. The good God *praestat nobis omnia abunde ad fruendum*, giveth us richly all things to enjoy. There were those who flung at our Master Himself the taunt that He was a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber. Avoid over-scrupulousness. On the other hand, you have done well to mention this. Take care lest a lawful pleasure should grow into a carnal hindrance. Be temperate in all things. To test yourself, let your Lents and your Advents be truly penitential seasons. You are strong; so fast on the appointed days and do not be satisfied with abstinence alone. As for giving everything to the poor, perhaps you are not called to do anything of the kind. If the unselfish and industrious people all acted in that way, the selfish and thriftless half of mankind would do no work at all and would become more and more degraded to the deadly peril of their souls.

"Most Christians do not give enough to the poor: but a few Christians, a very few and I think you are one of them, may give too much. You blamed yourself for spending time on Art. In this mountain village we are simple folk: but even here we know that Art ministers to our spiritual and temporal necessities. Man does not live by bread alone. This building would be just as truly a church if it had no belfry, no statues, no pictures, no painted windows: but the sight of the steeple lifts hearts to God, and the images, the paintings teach religion

to the children and the simple folk while I am preaching my dull sermons. In traveling about and spending time and money studying the works of other artists you are not wronging the poor: you are fitting yourself to serve them. I know your talent for music and I hope you will employ it *ad majorem Dei gloriam*. But even if you never write a Mass or an organ-piece, even if you compose nothing but lively dances and tuneful songs to cheer up your fellow-creatures whose days are so often dull and hard you will be spending your strength worthily. None the less I pray that your life-work may be something high and noble. To that end I advise although I cannot command you to recite every day the Divine office and thus to keep the ears of your soul ever open to God's voice.

"You confess that more than once you harbored unfilial thoughts against your father. My son, yours is a strange and bewildering character and I almost am surprised to hear that even your nearest kin did not always understand you. I earnestly beg you to continue your excellent practice of hearing Mass every day. You must often breathe a prayer for your father's soul and thus you will more than make amends. And I beg you will sometimes pray for an old priest and for a poor village in the high mountains.

"In the midst of heresy and schism, you have been miraculously preserved from grosser sins. Now that you are a Catholic, the devil will covet your soul more hungrily, he will bait his traps for it more busily and more cunningly. You will outwit and outfight the devil so long as you distrust your own feeble self and rely on the omnipotence and love of God. Read every week the life of a saint; and when you have identified those holy men and women whose battles and tasks have been most like your own, ask their intercession. Pray earnestly that you may be given a great love for our Queen and Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was through her,

as through a shining gateway, that the Divine Redeemer came to men and it is through her, still through her, that God's richest blessings are bestowed upon the world. Be high of mind, high of soul: but never put yourself above the rosary or above the artless devotions of simple fellow-Christians. For your penance you will say, while I am vesting for Mass, the hymn *Gloria in excelsis Deo*."

He ceased. Henry Coggin, kneeling in the shadow, had been hardly able to discern the priest's face through the wooden bars, but the light was growing and he beheld the countenance of an angel. The old man's gentle words had sunk like a cool and copious dew into his thirsty heart. In the past, Harry had often been scolded, bullied, frightened, puzzled by his mentors: and by Edward Redding he had been chaffed and teased. But from nobody save Edward Redding's father had he received grave and kindly counsel until this moment. Father Tobel was the Reverend Oswald Redding's social and intellectual inferior. Yet there was a power in Father Tobel's words which surpassed everything Harry had ever known or expected: because the Church was speaking through this her sacred minister—was teaching like her Divine Founder "as one having authority."

A low murmur of Latin recalled the penitent's attention. Straining to listen he caught the holy words of absolution and saw the priestly hand make the sign of the Cross. Then, after the briefest pause, Father Tobel emerged from the box and led Harry back to the Chapel of the Seven Dolors where they recited together, as in the legend of St. Augustine and St. Ambrose, *Te Deum laudamus*. And thus, before one of the poorest altars in the Hapsburg dominions; in a chapel where the thrill of their voices brought down a flake of plaster from the sham groining of the roof; with only one tattered book to share between himself and the peasant-born priest in his frayed and shiny cassock: thus was completed the reception into the



Catholic Church of Henry Coggin, into whose mind it never entered that a sagacious and learned Benedictine had warned him against patronizing Holy Church and against holding back from her his allegiance until high music and stately architecture and dignified ecclesiastics should furnish a proud enough setting for his surrender.

Once more guided by the old man's hand, Harry knelt to hear Mass in a place to the right of the candle-girt coffin. The girl mourners were kneeling on the left. With the concentration of mind which he had practised from childhood Harry did not release his gaze from the book until he had pronounced, softly and intently, all the clauses of *Gloria in excelsis Deo*. Then, while the priest still lingered in the sacristy, the convert raised his eyes.

There was something bright lying on the coffin. From the spot where he knelt this object was too high for him to see clearly but it was certainly of some polished metal because it flashed back the candle-light. At pompous obsequies in Berlin and Munich, Harry had often beheld their swords lying on the biers of generals, and once he had seen a baton on the catafalque of a field-marshal lying in state. He wondered vaguely how it had come to pass that some eminent personage was about to be interred in the humble churchyard of this mountain parish, and he was somewhat surprised that Father Tobel had said nothing about it. But he swiftly swept these wandering thoughts back into captivity, remembering that he was about to hear his first Mass as a Catholic and that it was not the hour for idle curiosity.

The celebrant entered the sanctuary and began the Mass. Despite his black vestments and the nearness of a coffin he performed the ineffable rites exultantly as if he could not fix his mind upon death and judgment but only upon the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Not even at

his first Mass, four and forty years before, had Father Tobel offered this Holy Sacrifice for the quick and for the dead with such faith and fervor.

The people stood up as usual when the server carried the missal from the south to the north corner of the altar for the reading of the Gospel. Harry rose with them. To see the priest he had to look sideways, across the coffin; and immediately he beheld the little ax which he had given to Christina. Some loving hand had cleaned and burnished the steel until it shone like silver against the sable pall.

Harry Coggin recoiled, shrank, started sharply. He could not keep back a little moan-like cry. Though the sound was small the village maidens heard it and one of them, who had been watching him wistfully all the time, again began to sob. Harry pulled himself together and stood straight and calm until the moment came when he could again kneel down. Then he let his thoughts run free.

It was not through callousness and not even entirely through his preoccupation in the great matter of his conversion that Henry Coggin had failed to recognize this coffin as Christina's. Father Tobel had offered no information about the funeral. As for the people at the inn, Harry had deliberately kept out of their way, knowing that to them the death of Fräulein Rabe was an exciting nine-days'-wonder as well as a piteous tragedy, and that genuine laments would be mixed with morbid chatter which he could not endure. But the main reason for his dullness was quite a different one. Throughout these three days, which seemed to have been either three short hours or three long years, the vastest happenings and sharpest emotions of his life had thronged round him and probed through him while he was exhausted by want of food and sleep, racked with suspense and bodily pain, distracted in mind, upheaved in soul. Christina had alternately overwhelmed him like a bursting wave or receded, smaller than a ripple, to the fur-

the horizon. Even as a child playing with a telescope looks first through the small end and then through the big, so that the cows in the meadow under his window appear first like mammoths on a wild prairie and then like the smallest wooden animals from the tiniest Noah's Ark, treading daintily in the finest moss: so by turns Henry Coggin had seen his friendship with Christina, now enormous and near, now speck-like and far.

The sum of muffled shufflings and breathings behind him told Harry that the church was filled with people. He felt sure that Christina's rich and fashionable and powerful friends were there. Probably Christina's betrothed lover was kneeling among the chief mourners. When Mass was over, Harry and this desolated man would have to meet. Perhaps there would be questions about the finding of Christina's body—questions and more questions and painful thanks. But as Harry pictured the scene, Father Tobel at the altar pronounced distinctly the words *sursum corda* and the convert once more lifted up his heart to God. Yet he could not try to put from him the sense of Christina's presence. It might be true that only her mortal part lay beneath the black and silver pall: but her invisible immortal self was no less certainly in the church, close to his side, worshiping God with him, enlightening and strengthening him in his new life.

When Henry Coggin knelt at last against the wooden communion-rail and received his Lord and his God, a supreme favor was bestowed upon him from heaven. Without ecstasy, without wonder, almost without feeling, he had an absolute certitude that He Who did not abhor the Virgin's womb was indeed and in truth entering into Harry's inmost being; that he was in truth and in deed welcoming the heavenly Guest to the hearthstone of his soul: that the Maker of heaven and earth, of all things, visible and invisible, was united to his, Harry Coggin's humanity and that his, Harry Coggin's humanity was

partaking of his Lord's Divinity. He was in God and God was in him. The almighty Source of all light and life, Who had given Christina her beautiful eyes, her bird-like voice, her eager spirit: Who had piled high the mountains whereon Christina was lost, Who had carved out her ravine of death: Who had caused the tree to grow from which this her coffin was made: Whose new-risen sun, one of His ten thousand thousand shining messengers, was kindling with a burning spear the steel blade of Christina's little ax: this unutterable, eternal Love was one with him, Harry Coggin, the meanest of His creatures. Mystery spread around him and above him like the trees of a solemn and boundless forest; but every shadow nursed warm light in its bosom, and nowhere fell the slightest blight of doubt. As if God were resting against him after the work of creation, Harry seemed to see all that God had made, all that God had done in Christina's life and in his own: "and, behold, it was very good."

Henry Coggin returned to his place near the bier. He had been kneeling there about a quarter of an hour, fervently offering his first Communion for Christina's soul when he heard a rustling sound a few inches in front of his closed eyes. Looking round he saw that Father Tobel had laid an unsealed envelope on the shelf of the prie-dieu and was now choosing a place where he might kneel to make his thanksgiving.

Harry believed that the envelope contained one of the gilded cards which he had seen little children receive on the day of their first Communion. He felt grateful for this attention and resolved to treasure the souvenir with reverence. But on opening the envelope he found no adoring angels with white wings and blue raiment holding high a golden chalice, no embossed or lace-edged paste-board. What he drew forth was a folded sheet of music-paper jotted thickly with crotchets and quavers by his own hand. Almost instantly he recognized



it as the manuscript of his album-leaf *The Raven* which he had given to Christina five days before.

Greatly bewildered, Harry unfolded the sheet. At last he turned it over and saw that the back was covered with words penciled in irregular lines. At the top of the page the writing was neat and firm but the characters grew large and clumsy as they neared the bottom. These were the sentences which Harry read:

*I know now that they will not find me alive. Nobody will think of searching for me in this hollow. I cannot limp a step further, I cannot cry aloud any more. It is God's holy will that I shall not outlive this night.*

*At Mass yesterday morning and again at the Wasserblase, God revealed it to me that Death and I must soon meet. But I thought it was my Harri who was to die and that I was to live long, long, long, happy in faithful sadness.*

*Sweet Mary, my dear Mother, how many thousand times with thy rosary in my hands have I said "pray for me now and in the hour of my death." How far apart, what thousands of ages apart, "now" and "the hour of my death" seemed to be! And at last they meet together, they melt into one. Oh, Mary, my Queen and Mother, pray God for me that if I am to die I may be spared the terrors of the night. After all, though I love like a woman, I am only a poor, spoilt, feeble, stupid child, so greedy for food, so peevish for warmth, so afraid of the dark.—Not once in my life have I lacked a meal till now, not once have I faced a night without some one to protect me.*

*My God, my God, when I began to write on this paper it seemed easy to obey Thy will. But it is hard to die. Why must I die, my God, my God?*

*Yesterday Harri frightened me when I asked him if he thought Christina Maria a pretty name. Jesus, Jesus Christ, I am Christina. I am thy unworthy namesake. Lord Jesus Christ, Thou didst endure three hours of anguish in the darkness for me. Must Christina too have her three hours of agony? Jesu mercy, Mary help.*

*The bell has rung by now for supper. By now Anna has told them that I am lost. But dusk has fallen. They can do nothing.*

*I tried to pray just now that God would work for me the greatest miracle since the world was made. I tried to pray that my Harri might descend these precipices, coming home this way. But I cannot pray such a prayer. In this world I am not to see Harri again.*

*Maiden most pure, Mary ever a virgin, if I had never come to spend my holidays among these mountains, if I had never met Harri, I might have made sooner or later a worldly marriage which would have dulled my soul and soiled my body. Or I might have made shipwreck of faith and of virtue as better women than I have done before me. This I can understand. Better that Death should rob me of my youth than that sin should rob me of my God. But I do not understand why God does not wish me to marry Harri. How we could have helped one another to grow ever better and nobler! Yet God alone knows. Perhaps we might have loved one another too much and have forgotten God.*

*How glad I am that I made my will when they said the cholera was coming to Vienna. Anna, poor true soul, is provided for. If I had lived she would never have left me; and*

*in spite of infirmity or old age she would have gone on slaving for me. Now she will have ease and rest.*

*It is strange to think that I shall never again see my little house in Vienna; no, not even my room at the inn. Until this moment, wherever I might be, I have always had the thought of the next place I am going to. Now there is no next place in this world. This is the end.*

*We are taught that Heaven is infinitely more beautiful and rapturous than the most lovely dreams of mortals. So Heaven will indeed be wonderful: because the happiness I have dreamed of with Harri these last few days was too great for my heart to contain.*

*I could murmur against God for requiring so much of me. If Harri were to find me here even when my strength is almost spent and it is too late to save my life—if he were to kiss me just once, holding me gently in his arms and saying that he loves me, then I could die gladly. But it is not to be.*

*Remember, Oh most loving Virgin, my mother, that I am Maria as well as Christina. I am thy namesake too. Ave Maria, gratia plena, help me to say like thee, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to Thy word."*

*The sun has set, the night is coming. Since I arranged my little altar in this niche of rock I feel more than resigned. I am happy. My foot does not hurt me so much and I have cooled my parched lips and tongue against the moist stone.*

*Ave Maria, Sancta Mater, I too am Maria. I too am a mother. I cannot be Harri's bride. Yet I feel with thankful joy that I am in a mysterious way his mother. Holy Mary,*

*you became the Mother of God. Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, is infinitely greater and more glorious than you, sweet Mother; and yet without you, His mother and mine, He did not fulfil His destiny, He did not come into the world. I do not know how it will come to pass: but God tells me that somehow my death is to be Harri's gate of life.*

*Soon it will be too dark to write. I shall put this paper in the little silk bag which hangs beneath my garments, against my heart, the little bag where I have kept this piece of music and my mother's ring. When they prepare me for burial they will find it. I solemnly charge the person who first reads it to respect the dead and to lock its contents in her breast. This paper is to be given to Father Tobel. He may show it to Harri. Then it is to be burnt. I do not wish the music on the back to be copied. Harri will write many beautiful pieces for those who still live: but this is all mine and none but the angels shall play it.*

*Harri gave me a little ax as well as this music. The ax slipped from my hand, and it was through clambering down to save it that I fell and must now die. I wish this little ax to be laid upon my bier and to be buried in my grave.*

*Harri is not to have any souvenir of me. This is my dying wish and command. He is not to have a tress of my hair or a ribbon or my jeweled silver rosary (which I give to Father Tobel, good priest and true father) or even one of the pictures I showed him in my prayer-book. I forbid him to linger among these mountains for a single day after my funeral or even to revisit this valley. He is young and he had hardly begun to love me. Therefore he must not let his dark Raven shadow the days to come. In his own England he will marry a woman of his own race and speech. I hope she will be truly*



*English, fair-skinned and golden-haired, so that she will never remind him of me. Oh, how I should have hated her yesterday, this English beauty who will be Harri's bride! But tonight she is my sister, my friend. I stretch out my hands through the fast-deepening darkness, like a dying mother, and I give Harri into her keeping. She cannot love him as I would have loved him, but I will watch over her from Heaven and help her with my prayers.*

*I can hardly see. When I opened my silk bag just now to hide this paper away I took out my mother's ring. I shall write to the bottom of the page and put the paper back. Then, kneeling before my altar, I shall betroth myself to Harri, speaking formal words and drawing this betrothal ring upon my finger.*

*Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I give you my heart and my life.*

When Harry Coggin had perused this holy script three times, Father Tobel approached him quietly and took the manuscript out of his hand. Harry made no resistance. The message was so burned into his brain that he could have recited every sentence word for word and could have imitated every turn of the handwriting. The priest made his way into one of the chapels and returned with a rough iron tray which was used to receive the drippings from a tripod of votive tapers. Bidding Harry hold this tray, Father Tobel thrust the sheets of paper into the flame of one of the great yellow candles which burned round Christina's coffin. He turned it this way and that until it was well alight and then dropped it, blazing all over, upon the tray. They watched it until it shrank into a scant, coal-black scroll, gashed and pricked all over by Harry's and Christina's pencils.

Father Tobel carefully enclosed the frail cinder in both his

hands, as if it had been a wounded bird, a poor young raven. Carrying the treasure with reverence he moved out of the church by the south door. Harry followed, his hands knit together, his gaze bent upon the ground, until they stood in the sunshine beside a newly-dug grave. The white-haired priest murmured some words which could not be heard and slowly unclasped his fingers, letting the black scroll break in the air and flutter down into the depths of the grave like dead leaves.

The sacristan hurried up anxiously, bearing the priest's biretta. Father Tobel covered his head and led Harry to the Calvary in the center of the church-yard. Over the rude graves of the mountain folk the arms of the Crucified Redeemer were extended wide. At length the old man broke his long silence and said:

"My son, you know now why I bade you prepare to depart hence this day. Before the sun sets your feet will be upon the plains, you will have begun the journey home to your own land. Never again will you behold this church or yonder grave. Never again shall we meet in the flesh.

"I do not dare to give you counsels—to admonish you, my son, who are so much more wise, more holy, more favored of Heaven than I can ever hope to be. But I may humbly ask of you one thing.

"To-day is the octave-day of the Assumption. Year by year until you die I beg you to make of these eight days and their vigil a holy season, a nine-days' prayer. Renew on these solemn anniversaries the vows you have just vowed. Make during these nine days, year by year, a good confession and devoutly receive Holy Communion, remembering your first confession and your first Communion in this humble church to-day.

"My son, long after I am gone, the good people of this parish will point out the place where the famous and beautiful

singer fell and the spot where the young English Hercules found her. They will murmur 'Poor lady,' they will praise her virtue and bounty, they will breathe charitable prayers for her soul. And then, when I am gone, none in the world but you will know that a saint has lived and died among us, that a saint lies buried among us sinners here. A saint, a great saint. Nor for her the splendors of canonization, the honors of the Church's altars. But she has her altars in your heart and mine where we shall humble our souls and implore her prayers.

"On the Feast of All Saints, only ten weeks from now, I bid you join with me in spirit, wherever you may be, in honoring this saint indeed. Oh, the nameless saints, the unknown saints, how it thrills and warms my heart to think of them at this hour! So many of the saints in the calendars have been popes, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, hermits, kings, queens, princesses, that sometimes we everyday folk are tempted to fear that our God is after all a respecter of persons and that saintliness is not for such as you and me. We forget that in the cloister and in the palace the light beats strong. Heroic virtue can hardly be hidden there; nor are champions wanting to advance the dead saint's cause. But for every saint who has an altar, an image, a Mass, an office, perhaps there are a thousand whose names are written only in Heaven and a few loving hearts. *O, altitudo divitiarum Dei*, O the height, the depth of the riches of God! What legions of hidden saints He has set off against us poor sinners! Even to His Church God will not tell all His secrets.

"Harri, I must utter just once the name by which your saint loved to call you. You know that I am a plain old man, a peasant's son, with no elegant arts of speech, no poetical imagination, no graceful fancies. But ever since her body was found, ever since I read the paper which we have burned, a thought has kept coming to me again and again. Unto you,

My son, coming hither from your England in the rainy West, surely God has spoken as He spoke to Elias, *Vade contra orientem et abscondere in torrente, corvisque praecepi ut pascant te ibi*: 'Go towards the east and hide thyself by the torrent, and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.' An unseen Hand brought you hither and a raven has fed you with the Bread of Heaven.

"Last night I turned to the Third Book of Kings to read these words which were haunting me; and a little further on I found that Elias was miraculously fed once more; and then the raven had become an angel. Ah, she has been to you more than a raven, your dear saint, your poor saint! Like the pelican she had torn open her own breast that you might be nourished with warm blood, the life-blood of faith. Like a dove she hovered over you this morning when you were reconciled to the Holy Church and when you received your first Communion. And now she is flown, this raven, this pelican, this dove, this bright bird, to flutter round the throne of God, to perch upon His very shoulder and to woo for you from Him by her sweet songs His richest blessings.

"I will say no more. Here and now let me clasp your hand. We will not have two farewells. This is the end. My son, my dear son, go back to your own country, go back and set your hand to your life's work. Go in peace. Go forth with God."

Father Tobel entered the presbytery and Harry Coggin lingered in the church-yard. Under the Calvary there was not a breath of wind: but high overhead a strong breeze must have been blowing because the mists came streaming wildly towards him from the tops of the mountains. Suddenly a peak in the west caught the full radiance of the sun and the virgin snow above its dark pine-woods burned like a white fire upon an altar.



As height after height broke into flame, like a chain of beacons, Harry remembered that beyond them was England. And the rampart of ice did not daunt him. He had come to the full stature of his manhood. The mountains with their dizzy stairways and their frozen corridors hid no more secrets from him, held for him no more terrors. He felt that he could have stepped over those sharp summits as if they had been no more than ant-hills in his path.

After six days of drought the lesser streams and waterfalls were dumb: but the torrent resounded always in its ancient bed, like a deep voice calling.





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